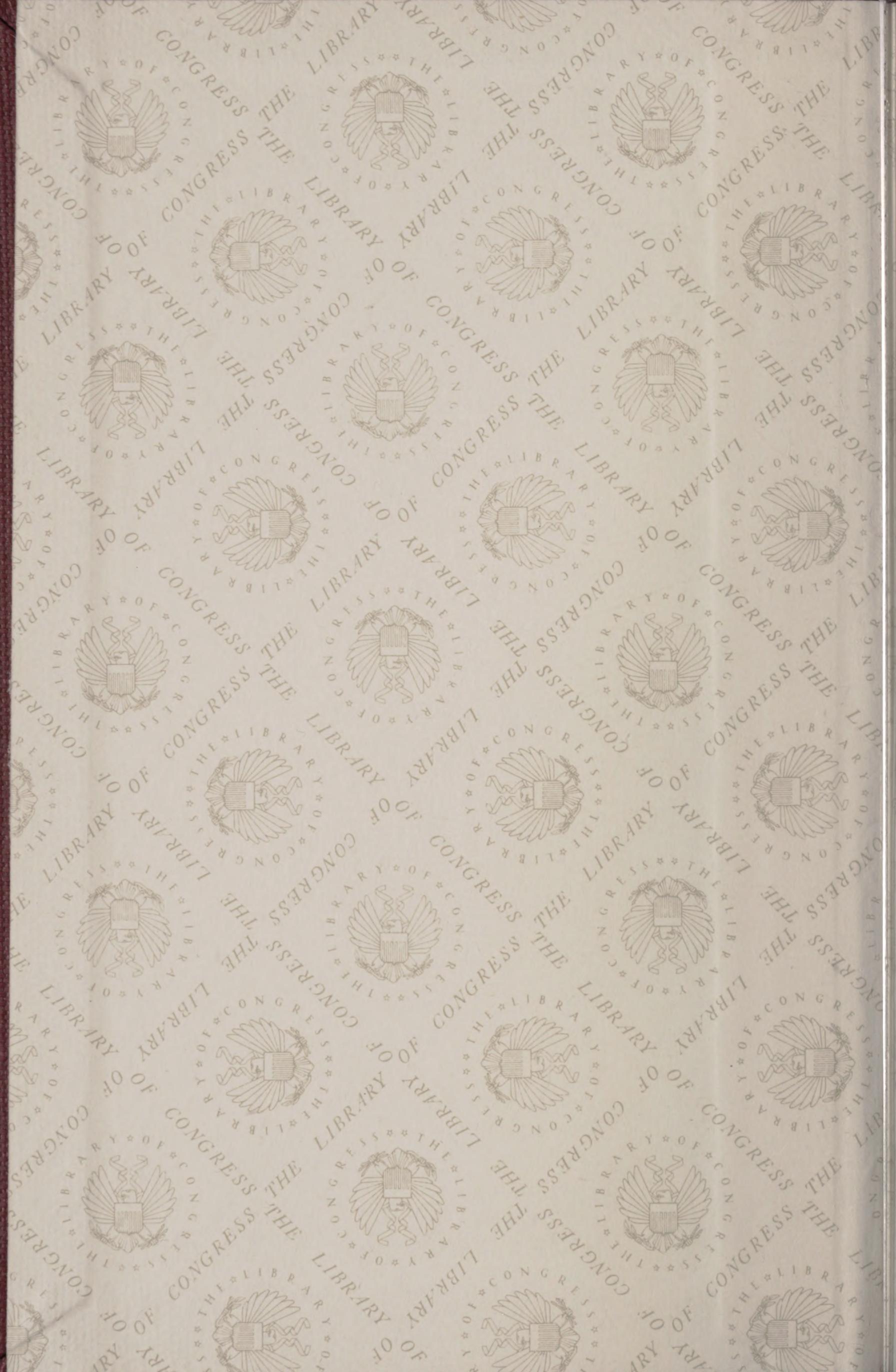
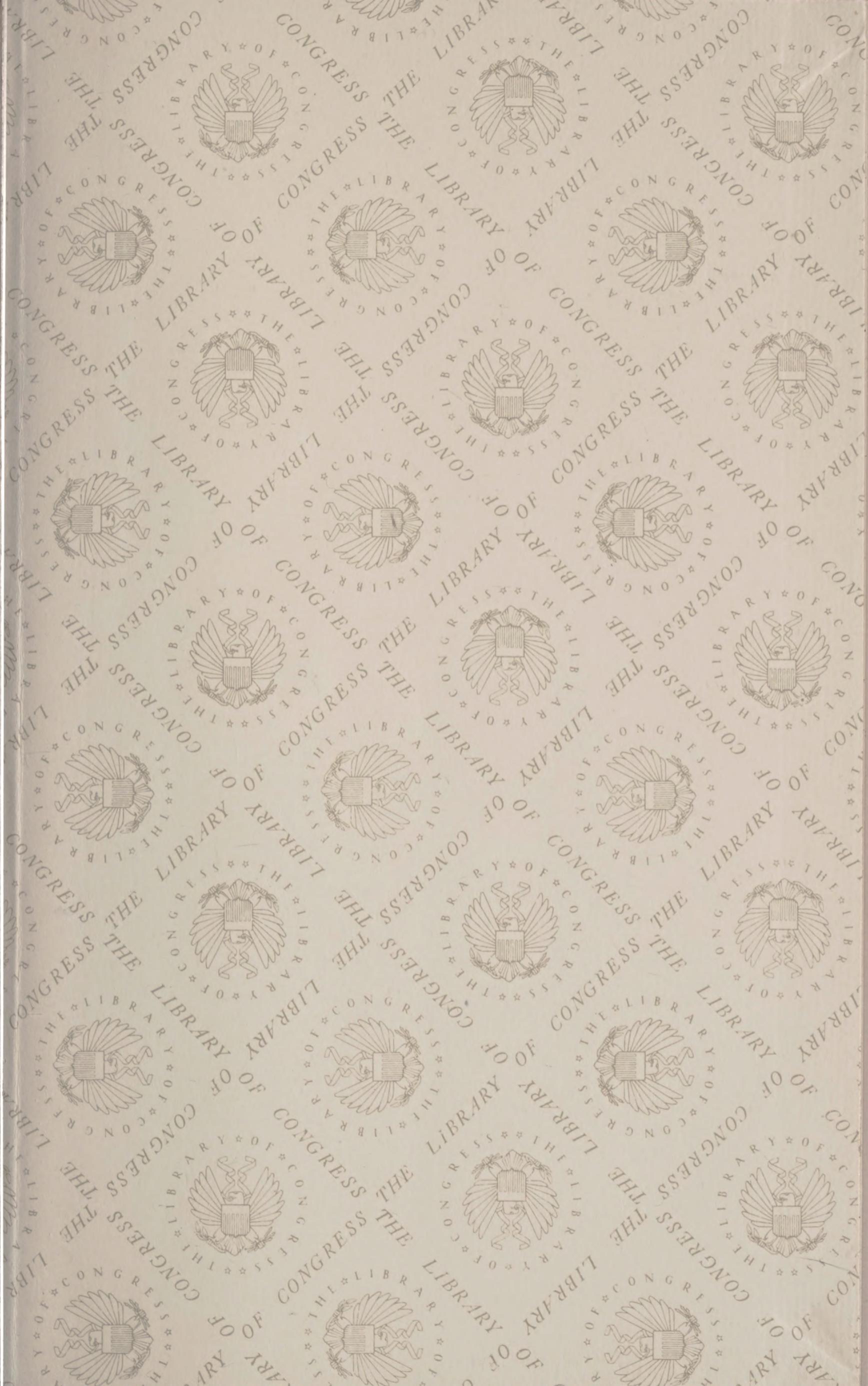


PZ
3

.L642S

FT MEADE
GenColl





THE LIBRARY OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CONGRESS

LIBRARY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS
PRINTED AND SOLD BY THE NATIONAL PRINTER
WASHINGTON: 1857

OVERLAND LIBRARY NO. I.

L 6

STORIES AND NOVELS

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

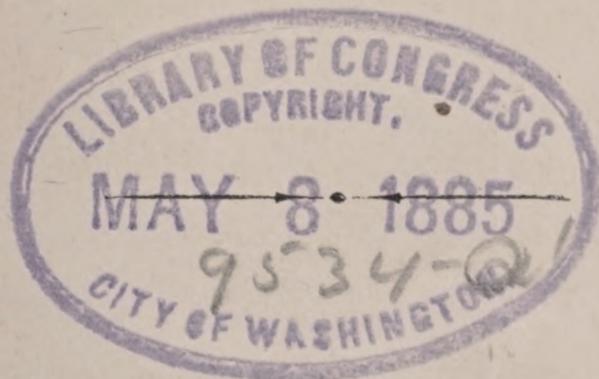
RUDOLF LINDAU.

I.

CONTENTS:

HANS, THE DREAMER.—ALL IN VAIN.—FIRST LOVE.

40



CHICAGO:
L. SCHICK, PUBLISHER.

1885

PZ3

.L6425

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1885, by
LOUIS SCHICK,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

HANS, THE DREAMER.

[From the German of Rudolf Lindau.]

COPYRIGHT, 1885, BY L. SCHICK.

Thomas Midford stepped slowly forth from one of those charming, elegant little houses that ornament the upper part of the Champs Elysées in Paris. He stood still a few seconds, gazing straight in front of him, his head inclined to one side, and then turned towards the Place de la Concorde. After taking about twenty steps in this direction, he turned around and returned to the house he had just quitted, even more slowly than he had left it. He crossed the threshold; but then he seemed to become undecided again, for he halted in the vestibule, and glancing around absent-mindedly, rubbed his chin meditatively, whistling softly to himself. Finally he pressed his hat down tight upon his forehead, and said half audibly: "No, it will not do!" — and then, his hands in his pockets, and his eyes cast down, he strolled down the broad avenue with thousands of other promenaders, who had been attracted to the Bois de Boulogne by the Sunday afternoon and the beautiful spring weather, and were now returning to the city. He did not turn around again, nor pay any attention to the well-dressed people who met or hastened past him. But he repeated several times, speaking to himself, the same words which he had uttered in the vestibule, nodding his head at the same time, as if acquiescing in them: — "It will not do.... even with the best of wills, it will not do!"

“What is it that will not do, Tom?”

The one thus addressed stopped and glanced with a preoccupied air into the bright, pleasant face of the speaker, who continued, laughing:

“Not yet cured of your old habit of carrying on delightful conversations solely and alone for your private benefit? Let other people have some of the good of them! — So tell me all about it: what is it that will not do, to-day?”

Midford was silent a few moments. Then he asked: “What was it really that I was saying? What did you hear?”

“You were asserting that something would not do... even with the best of wills it would not do!”

“And I was quite right,” answered Midford, gravely and positively: “It really will not do.”

“I do not doubt it at all; but tell me now why it will not do?”

Midford rubbed his chin again, looking past his friend into the air, but so closely that the latter was not quite certain whether he was being looked at or not, and finally said:

“Why.... well, because, Sandy, because children alone have the privilege of being allowed to accept presents which they neither can nor even wish to return, without its being considered a disgrace; and because I, in the present case, would be only the one to receive. Consequently, not being a child any longer, I should have to consider it a disgrace, and that would not do. Do you understand now?”

“Not a word!”

“No matter. I understand; that is enough.... Good evening, Sandy. Come and see me soon. For a long time I have not felt so desolate as.... as during the last

ten minutes. No, wait a minute! I will come and see you early tomorrow morning. Perhaps you can give me some good advice."

Midford extended his hand to his friend Edington and would then have left him, had not the latter laid his hand on his friend's arm and detained him, saying:

"Come, out with it! What is it that will not do?"

"Well — what I want most on earth!" and with this Midford turned impatiently and somewhat crossly aside, and went on his way.

Edington looked after him, shaking his head and murmuring to himself: "Still the same as ever — Hans, the Dreamer!"

While this conversation was taking place on the Champs Elysées, a young girl was sitting at a window of the house that Midford had so recently left. She was looking out upon the street, but she saw nothing of what was going on there. Her own thoughts occupied her completely, to the exclusion of everything else. She was a handsome girl, the finished type of the American beauty: tall, slender, stylish, with slim little hands and feet; a wonderfully delicate, transparent, pale complexion; hair, reddish-brown and wavy; intelligent, clear brown eyes; the forehead a trifle too high; the nose a trifle too delicate; the mouth, with its red lips and its closely set rows of white teeth, somewhat too small; the well-formed chin too large — almost a masculine chin. The expression of the whole face intelligent, clear and determined. Edith Comyn was not a young lady whose heart one could hope to touch by quoting a sentimental poem, — a tranquil, dignified girl, very "matter of fact," as her compatriots said of her.

Yet the deliberate, prosaic Edith was at this moment very much excited and annoyed — as indeed she had good

reason to be. Something had just happened to her that even men in a like case forgive but grudgingly and exceedingly rarely, but which women never forgive. The man whom she had given to understand, as distinctly as was compatible with her self-respect, that she would not be displeased if he should draw her to his heart and kiss her — this man had not drawn her to his heart and had not kissed her. He had, on the contrary, only pressed gently the little slender hand which rested so confidently in his, and had then — dropped it, uttering as he did so, in an undertone, four mysterious words: “It will not do.” He looked the while very peculiar, very sad, but that did not change anything in the dreadful fact that he had not retained the little hand and besought its owner to entrust it to him for life. And who was this man who had dared to inflict this disgrace upon her, — upon *her*, Edith Comyn, at whose feet the most elegant, the most charming and the wealthiest among all the gentlemen of Paris were kneeling. Was it for this that she had made fun of the old and enamoured Marquis de Contades, shown the elegant Viscount Beauchamp the door, sent back to America in despair the wealthy Daniel Welsh from Brooklyn, and cast aside the still wealthier William Hale from Sacramento. — Was it for this that she had rejected all the offers made her during the past winter, — among them some really brilliant and tempting ones, — to be now “spurned” by a Thomas Midford? She blushed to her forehead with shame and indignation at the thought. — Who was Thomas Midford, to think that he could venture to mortify her thus with impunity? Was he a prince, a millionaire, a celebrity, a miracle of beauty, talent or elegance? — None of these. The simplest, the most uninteresting among all her acquaintances, was he. Rich? — Not at all. He did not even keep a horse and carriage,

and he did not deprive himself of these luxuries because he was stingy, but — as Edith knew from his own lips — because his limited means would not permit him to incur any such expenses. How had she come to forget herself so far as to single out this particular one to encourage, while she had always maintained a cold and distant reserve with those more favored than he? Why, for weeks now had her thoughts been occupied with him, and almost with him alone? When he came to see her, he spoke less than any other of her callers, and what he said was not, as a rule, especially clever. He preferred to sit near the table where the albums were lying, and look them over, although he must have seen all the pictures and photographs already a hundred times; and only occasionally, at long, far too rare intervals, would he look up, slowly and diffidently, and his brown, tranquil eyes would travel around the *salon* until at last, for one brief moment, they would rest upon her face. And then her heart would become warm and full and insane ideas would pass through her head. She would have liked to spring up and embrace him, beseeching him to smile once again so sweetly, to smile upon her — for he smiled so differently from other people: innocently as a child, and yet so sorrowfully! How had it happened that she had noticed this in him the very first day, — she, who usually vouchsafed barely a passing glance to strangers? Was he handsome? — No. Fair-looking? Not even this. He impressed no one; he was unassuming in every particular, — a young man such as we meet by hundreds every day. And yet Edith's glance loved to linger upon his face, and she was obliged to place a restraint upon herself, or she would have gazed on him continually; and when she succeeded in keeping her eyes turned away from him for five minutes, she felt as if there were a gnawing at her heart; she longed for him, and it

seemed to her as if she had been depriving herself of a great happiness from all eternity! What was it that attracted her so powerfully to him? The desire to make him happy combined with something like compassion; the longing to have him know, without her being obliged to tell him, that she sympathized with him. But even this compassion was, in a certain way, objectless, for she did not know whether he was unhappy or whether he had any cause whatever for being unhappy. He had been living for some time in Paris; belonged to the American colony there, moved in good society, and had never made any complaints, at least in her presence. To her greeting: "How goes the world with you, Mr. Midford?" she had always received the same reply: "Splendidly." "You look worried." "That is only in appearance. I have no cause for being worried." "What are you forever thinking about, Mr. Midford? You are dreaming with your eyes open; you are so preoccupied that one can hardly talk with you at all." "Oh, no! I hear everything. That is only my way, you must not be misled by it. Pray keep on talking."

And yet she saw that he was concealing from her something which depressed him; and she would have liked to find out what it was that he wanted. She would have given everything that she possessed, with joy, to bring by some magic spell the light of contentment to his silent features; for she loved him as she had never loved before, — as well as she could love, — because she felt that he loved her more and better than any of the others, and then . . . because she loved him. These reasons had been sufficient for her and had induced her to distinguish Mr. Midford from the rest in a way which did not long remain unnoticed by her mother.

"I do not understand you," the latter observed one

day; "you are so reserved with everybody, so distant, that many persons consider you cold and unsympathetic; but with that man you display a cordiality which there is nothing to justify, and which, to tell the truth, displeases me very much."

"Do not call Mr. Midford 'that man', if you do not wish to hurt my feelings."

"I do not want to hurt your feelings, and I am ready to call him anything you choose; but do explain to me what it is you find so peculiarly attractive in him. I examined him again yesterday, and, to be honest, I must say that, even with the best of wills, I could not discover anything fascinating about him.... on the contrary, he is awkward and clumsy; he has quite a commonplace face...."

"He looks kind and intelligent."

"I do not know where you find the intelligence. Have you ever heard him say anything especially witty or brilliant?"

"I detest great talkers. Mr. Midford pleases me just because he is so silent."

"Very well, my child. I see it does no good to talk with you upon this subject. As for me, I do not like Mr. Midford."

"And I like him very much, mamma."

Miss Edith usually had the last word in all disputes with her mother. She belonged to that class of peace-loving persons who are charming to live with, if they have their own way in everything. She was not exacting, she demanded very little from those around her; but in return she gave them very little and never gave up to them in anything. Any opinion once formed she continued to maintain with quiet obstinacy, and contradiction only made her more determined and stubborn. Mrs. Comyn was

aware of this fact and had therefore made it a rule never to argue with her daughter. She had learned from experience that by refraining from disputing with her, she would easiest and best attain her aims. For the self-willed, obstinate Edith was by no manner of means a model of perseverance; on the contrary, she was a young lady who changed her points of view quite frequently, — and this, too, without always a very powerful motive.

* * *

Midford's interest in other persons' money matters was very slight. He knew, if not from direct experience, yet by meditating upon his own case, that the wealth of his friends and acquaintances would never be of any practical use to him. He did not possess the talent for borrowing money, and his friends' fortunes had no value for him, as he so clearly understood that even the wealthiest among them would not have helped him if he had been in need; not because his friends were all, without exception, so selfish, but because he knew that he, Midford, was utterly lacking in all those qualities which characterize the man to whom one lends money. The respect with which most persons regard men of wealth was to him incomprehensible. In his experience, intercourse with the rich had only cost him money, while in the society of those less well-off he could save money. His indifference to the pecuniary affairs of others was so genuine, that he did not know which of his acquaintances were poor, rich, or in moderate circumstances. He judged them in all simplicity according to the outlays which he saw them make. If any one kept horses and carriages, gave dinner parties and balls, and led in general the life of a man of wealth, Midford accepted as self-evident the fact that he was rich. He thus took it for granted that Mrs. Comyn was a lady of wealth, and her

daughter an heiress, who sooner or later would come into the possession of a large fortune. This last thought it was with which he was now occupied, as he was proceeding on his way Monday morning to call on his friend Edington.

Alexander Edington, the younger partner in an American banking house established in Paris, was sitting in his office engaged in reading the morning papers when Thomas Midford entered the room. The new-comer shook hands with his friend and then dropped into a chair which stood near the desk at which Edington usually wrote. After a silence of a few minutes' duration, which the American, accustomed as he was to so many kinds of eccentricities, did not attempt to interrupt, Midford leaned forward, with his elbows on his knees, and looking straight ahead, remarked in an undertone:

"Yes, that is it!"

The other gentleman cast a side glance at him and said:

"What?"

"What can I do, Sandy, to make money, — lots of money, — right away?"

"Nothing simpler in the world!"

A quiet, questioning look from Midford was the response to this.

Edington answering it, continued:

"Buying low, selling high, and keeping up this business on a large scale, will make you in a short while a wealthy man."

"I came to have a serious talk with you."

"I am speaking in sober earnest."

Midford arose calmly: "Well, then, in that case I will bid you good morning and go on my way."

Edington stood up also, and laying his hand upon Mid-

ford's shoulder, forced him back into his chair. Midford offered no opposition, and, when seated, looked up into the face of his friend, now standing before him.

"Thomas Midford, my dear fellow," said the latter, "how can I or how can any reasonable human being give you a satisfactory reply to the question which you have seen fit to put to me, as confidently as if you were sure there was an answer possible to it: 'How can I make money?' Confound it all, don't you know that everyone in the world is asking that same question: Rothschild as well as the poorest beggar? Money is made every day, and every day certain people make more or less money; but *how* they do it, that is not their secret — for in that case they could reveal it — but their own innate qualities, of which even they themselves are ignorant in most cases. What good would it do you if Liszt were to explain to you in detail how he plays, or Meyerbeer, how he composes, or Corot, how he paints? Would it put you in a position to enable you to give a concert, compose an opera or paint a picture? Do you think that if Rothschild were to describe to you ever so minutely how his grandfather managed to become a millionaire, you could go and do likewise? Never, never, old fellow! One man is born with a peculiar faculty for becoming a man of wealth, exactly as another is born with a peculiar faculty for becoming a great artist. I know dozens of clever, industrious, educated men, who have to fight poverty their whole lives long, and who will, in all probability, die poor beggars, in spite of their most earnest efforts to make money. If I am not mistaken in my estimate of you, Tom, you have about as much faculty for making a millionaire of yourself as I have for making a — bishop: not a preëminent faculty, Tom, by no means a preëminent faculty!"

Midford, who had been drawing geometrical figures

with his cane upon the carpet, with his eyes still cast down, answered half-audibly :

“You may be right. . . . Too bad !”

“Yes, it is too bad, but no more and no less so than that you have no especial faculty for making a painter or a musician of yourself.”

“That seems logical. . . . And now I will go.” He arose, rubbed his hands together and repeated slowly : “It is really too bad !. . . . Good morning, Sandy.” But the latter stepped between him and the door, saying :

“Stay a minute longer. How to make a fortune is something in which I am unfortunately unable to instruct you ; but if you are temporarily embarrassed, I will place at your disposal, with the greatest pleasure, whatever amount you may require. . . .”

Midford shook his head.

“. . . . Or, if you are looking for some situation which will give you enough to live on, I might perhaps be able to assist you.”

“That would do me no good. . . . I want to make a fortune right away.”

“So do I, too, my dear Midford.”

The latter was rubbing his chin again in his abstraction.

“Tell me,” he began, after a brief pause. “You have the reputation of being a very clever young man, and I should like to ask you. . . ., do you think. . . .”

He hesitated and stopped, stepped to the window, still lost in thought, and looked out upon the street ; then he again approached Edington, and continued in his meditative way :

“Do you believe the stories we read in novels which tell about young men who perform all sorts of miracles in order to win or compete for the lady of their love ?”

"That depends upon the kind of miracles they describe."

"Well, I will be more explicit: do you believe that a poor tramp like me...."

"I did not know that you were a tramp."

"I have been practically a tramp again for some little time now."

"I am very sorry to hear that."

"That does not help the matter any, but I am much obliged all the same.... do you believe that a poor tramp, such as I have told you I am, could manage things so as to become a rich man within a short space of time, when that is the only means by which he can win the heart and hand of the woman he loves?"

"Yes; — if you would or could steal the money; otherwise I see no way, indeed. Nonsense, everything else that may be written in novels! Paper is patient. Where could you come across so much money all of a sudden? Do you believe that you would be sure to find it because you need it? Everybody needs money.... Because you long for it with greater eagerness? Everybody else is in the same condition. No, Tom, do not deceive yourself: between today and tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, no one like you can make himself a man of wealth in any usual, honorable way. You might win the chief prize in a lottery, or some unknown uncle in India might die and leave you a fortune next week, — but such things as these have nothing to do with your love. Can you imagine that you could make yourself an artist of importance before tomorrow night, by the might of your love? — No? You are even less likely to become a rich man! You can rely upon what I say, and you can tell your novel writers, with my compliments, that they do not understand anything about the matter."

"It seems so to me, too.... But now I really must go."

Midford departed, went down the Rue Castiglione, turned then to the right and strolled up the Champs Elysées. "I knew that it would not do," he said to himself; "but it is best that I should tell her just why it will not do."

He entered a reading room, called for pen and paper, and wrote the following note, after having reflected for some time, resting his head on his hand:

"Dear Miss Comyn:

I would like to have a few minutes' undisturbed conversation with you. I might have told you yesterday what I now wish to say, but at that time the matter was not quite clear to me. Please, therefore, be so kind as to let me know when I can find you at home. The bearer will wait for your answer.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS MIDFORD."

Edith was sitting after breakfast with her mother in the *salon* when this note was brought to her. She glanced through the few lines in a second and a delicious warmth filled her heart. She drew a deep breath and exclaimed softly: "Thank Heaven!"

"Who has been writing to you?" inquired her mother.

"A friend," Edith replied curtly.

Mrs. Comyn was accustomed to see her daughter act upon her own responsibility, having brought her up according to certain theories at which a French or German mother would have shaken her head, but from which she was now the less inclined to deviate, as she had attained a result upon which she considered that she might justly pride herself. Edith was a well-trained girl, who had never misused the liberty which she had always

enjoyed, and who justified in the fullest degree the confidence which her mother reposed in her. Mrs. Comyn consequently was content with the laconic answer which Edith had given her, and observed without uneasiness, although not without some curiosity, that she was making preparations to answer the letter she had just received.

“Are you going to drive with me?” Mrs. Comyn inquired, rising.

“No, dear mamma. I shall stay at home. When will you be back?”

“About four o’clock.”

Mrs. Comyn left the *salon*. She saw a messenger waiting in the hall, but the idea of questioning him did not even occur to her. She had taught her daughter to respect the privacy of others’ letters, and she had always set her the best of examples in the exercise of this duty.

The note which Thomas Midford received in the café, where he had waited for the reply to his letter to Edith, contained only a couple of lines:

“I shall be at home at one o’clock, and shall be very glad to see you. E. C.”

It was half-past twelve. Thomas started slowly upon his way to the tiny hotel in the upper part of the Champs Elysées. Not far from the house an open carriage rolled past him, in which Mrs. Comyn was seated. Midford raised his hat; she returned his greeting with cold politeness. Thomas looked after her:

“She would make an uncomfortable mother-in-law for a penniless son-in-law,” he murmured to himself.

He walked up the steps of the Comyn residence and waited there quietly until his watch marked one minute of one. Then, with a throbbing heart, he pulled the bell, and immediately afterwards, as soon as the door was

opened, he entered the room in which Edith was waiting for him. She arose quickly and came to meet him with outstretched hands. She had forgiven him for everything that had happened between them the day before. It had been his diffidence, she had decided, that had prevented him from saying then what she wished to hear from him. He had come now, to speak plainly at last, to confess his love to her. She was happy.

But the tender, longing glance with which her eyes gave him welcome remained unanswered. He held her hand tightly, but his eyes were fastened upon the floor. Finally he glanced up timidly at her, and then at once his gaze wandered hesitatingly about the room. He had prepared a well-turned little speech in his head. But now his memory utterly refused to do his bidding. A pause ensued, which soon became painful. Edith, withdrawing her hand gently, and with some embarrassment, sank into a chair.

"Miss Comyn," he began at last, "I have come to bid you farewell."

This she had not expected. A sensation of impotent anger overpowered her; she felt herself wounded and humiliated in her inmost soul.

"Farewell," she said, rising quickly.

"No; do not leave me thus; listen to me! Let me tell you why I am going." His voice was low and intensely sad.

Her indignation vanished as rapidly as it had arisen. She was still trembling from her violent agitation, but she hoped again. All was not yet lost, so long as he stood before her and could speak with her, within reach, in the power of her glances.

"Miss Edith," he continued, after she had reseated herself, "I have been talking this morning with an intelli-

gent and kindly-disposed gentleman, and he has confirmed me in what, after mature reflection, I had concluded to be the truth, namely, that it would be extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, for me, in a short space of time, to make a fortune."

Edith looked up at him in astonishment. Midford did not notice this; he was utterly and entirely engaged in seeking to give expression to the thoughts with which his brain was teeming. He seated himself, uninvited, upon a chair opposite Edith's, and continued in a low tone of voice, as if he were speaking to himself. He held his head somewhat cast down and slowly rubbed his thumb with his forefinger.

"If I were a man of rare ability, I would say to myself that I would, sooner or later, succeed in making myself a rich man. If I were heedless, I should cast off from my mind that which is worrying me at this moment. I am not a genius and I am not heedless; I am a sensible man and I hope that I shall always remain an honest man. To incur debts which one cannot pay, or to live on other persons' money, when one is strong enough to earn one's own bread, is not honest, according to my way of thinking. Perhaps I may be mistaken. There may be circumstances which may make it right to incur debts which we know we cannot pay, or to allow ourselves to be supported by friends and relatives. But it does not seem to me to be consistent, and hence it does not seem right.... If I at the present time.... You cannot know how much I have considered this matter for months.... if I wanted to get married today, what is it that I should be doing? — Something wise, foolish? — No. From my point of view it would be something dishonest. Wherefore? — It is very clear, very simple: I know with absolute certainty that what I possess would not be sufficient to satisfy the

demands which a woman brought up in luxurious surroundings would be justified in making, and upon whose realization her happiness would depend more or less. If this woman were to love me so well that she would be willing to share my privations — No; this is not the question, for she would not have to impose any privations upon herself, as she is rich. Ought she to revel in luxury and I alone lead the life of a poor man? Neither would that do please follow my argument: she, the rich wife, would not accept my suit unless she loved me; and in that case she would, as a matter of course, wish to share with me everything that she possessed. Then what would happen? — I should be living on my wife's money. This happens frequently. I say it will not do, it will not do for me. If I were certain, or if I dared to entertain the hope, that some time in the future I might become a man of wealth, then I would consider that which I was obliged to accept from her as a loan, in a certain sense. But the probabilities are, that I shall never make a fortune I should therefore simply be allowing myself to be supported by my wife This I could not do Love pays and keeps no account! The one who gives may think and say this; if the one who takes does so, it seems to me — well, ignominious, to express it mildly. If I, for example, were to speculate in this fashion, I should, as the taker, soon become contemptible in my own eyes, and, who knows, perhaps she, the rich, giving wife, might also learn to despise me in time. True, genuine love does not take everything into consideration so, it is blind. I consider it all, I see quite plainly. Then perhaps I do not truly love It is very complicated Do you understand me, Miss Edith?"

She kept her eyes cast down and did not stir.

"I cannot say everything as I have it in my heart,"

he went on. "The more I say, the more I find to explain. It all seems full of contradictions. If I love, I ought to be able to surmount every obstacle, but this I cannot do. Well then, perhaps I do not love and only imagine that I do.... In this case there is actually no excuse for my suing for the hand of the one whom I pretend to love.... and therefore.... and so.... I have come to bid you farewell."

He arose, pushed back his chair and stood in silence before her. She did not know what she ought to say. She had imagined her love-romance, — had in reality, and in her day-dreams, received many a declaration of love, but none had been like this that she had just heard. She was completely at a loss.

Midford looked at her absent-mindedly and silently for a few seconds, then he stepped behind the chair from which he had risen and, stroking the back gently, as if it were some living being, he continued, in a calm, even tone.

"I knew in California a man who used to drink a great deal. For some unknown reason I had a certain feeling of friendship for him. He frequently sought my society. One evening he said to me: Life hammers a fellow hard. I would never have believed it before, that a man could live quite contentedly with a great crime on his heart. — I did not understand him, but I did not wish to question him just then, as he was half drunk, and it seemed to me that I should be taking an unwarrantable advantage of him if I were to put incriminating questions to him in that condition. A fortnight later he hanged himself, and then we learned that for some time he had been a defaulter, and that his crime would have been found out within a few days. Many persons can live in crime. It is hard to live in disgrace.... Do you know what money anxieties are?— No, you do not know. Money anxieties are hard. I have

great anxieties of this kind ; but I live with them now and then quite contentedly. I might perhaps be able to live with crime I do not know but this I do know, positively, that in disgrace, with your contempt, I could not live. Yes, a man must make this all plain to himself, even if he does love. It does not show genius, but to my mind it is honest, honorable Does love excuse dishonor ? Not for any length of time, I should think And therefore, once more, farewell !”

He approached the door. There he turned for the last time and said:

“Will you not give me a kind word to take with me on the long and dreary way which lies before me ?”

Then she looked up, and in a voice suffocated with tears, said softly: “Farewell, Mr. Midford.”

* * * * *

Thomas Midford had told Edith that he had great money anxieties. He had added that in spite of them he lived now and then quite contentedly; but in reality this contentment had only very rarely fallen to his share. Of late, especially, his cares had been weighing upon him so heavily that he sometimes thought he would be obliged to succumb; but then he would say to himself: “I must not leave a duty unfulfilled because I long for rest. I belong to my creditors.” And he lived and toiled on. A few years previously he had entrusted the largest part of his small fortune to an old friend, and in the course of time, as his friend requested additional advances, he had incurred obligations the extent of which he did not realize. His friend went through bankruptcy and his creditors came to Midford one day to demand payment of ten thousand dollars, for which he had given an acceptance to accommodate the bankrupt house. Midford possessed the gift of inspiring confidence. He told his creditors that they should not

lose a cent by him, but that he must ask them to wait. To this they had agreed; and since that day his constant thought had been to save what he could, so as to diminish his debt. He was exceedingly simple in his tastes, and his sound health allowed him to submit to many privations. He could have lived on bread and water, and in fact he did live so economically that, without anyone around him having any suspicion of it, his acquaintances would have thought he was joking if he had told them what he required for his support.

The news that he was ruined had come to him in Paris, a few months before the day on which he had made such a difficult and complicated declaration of love to Edith. He had at that time made up his mind to return to California, where he had at one time accepted a remunerative situation, and where he hoped now to make money enough to satisfy his creditors in the course of three or four years. But leaving Paris had become very difficult to him: he had not been able to tear himself away from Edith Comyn. He reproached himself bitterly for this again and again, and yet he still remained. But now the die was cast: he would and must leave Paris without delay.

This was his firm determination as he walked down the Champs Elysées towards his rooms, buried in deep thought, his hands clasped behind his back. What seemed most remarkable to him now was, that it was no longer the anxiety in regard to his creditors that was driving him to California. He could not endure to remain any longer in Edith's vicinity. "I ought not to marry her,—consequently I will not marry her," he mused to himself. "What, then, is there to keep me here?—My pleasure? I have no right to think of my own pleasure; and besides, I could not divert myself here in Paris without seeing Edith; and

as I ought not to seek her society any longer, it is certainly best for me to be off."

He entered the garden of the Tuileries and seated himself upon a bench there. Many thoughts, all very dreary ones, passed through his mind, and, forlornly communing with himself, he sat gazing at vacancy. He recalled to his memory, he knew not why, a lonely old bachelor, whom he had known long years ago, when at home with his parents, since then deceased. He had once remarked: "A life full of cares is more endurable than an empty life." Empty Midford's life had never been; he had always had worries, and had even created them for himself when they did not come unbidden and unwelcome. Now it seemed to him as if they had all suddenly vanished, as if he had nothing to think of but Edith Comyn. A few months ago she had been nothing to him; other cares and thoughts had filled his mind completely then; and now it seemed to him as if, with Edith, everything had vanished that had filled his heart before. He experienced a horrible emptiness. "She was my whole life," he said to himself; "what shall I do without her?"

Edith Comyn was no dreamer; but Midford's last words—"Will you not give me a kind word to take with me on the long and dreary way which lies before me?"—rang in her ears long after Midford had gone. She stepped to the window and looked down upon the lively scene at her feet. Well-dressed gentlemen and ladies were passing up and down the sidewalk; carriages driving rapidly past covered the whole broad avenue as with a brilliant, moving carpet, dazzling to the eyes and bewildering to the senses. Someone below bowed to her, and she thought, mechanically, what did it matter to her who bowed to her. It was not Midford, for he was gone—on a long and dreary way! What ought she to do? For weeks she had been

thinking of Midford alone. On his account she had rejoiced when others told her she was beautiful. For him she had spoken as soon as he appeared in her vicinity. The sense of unrest which she had experienced ever since she had known him had become her life. And was she never to see him again? She had been so confused when he mentioned his departure that she had not been able to reply to him. She had only said farewell as if she fully acquiesced in the fact of his departure. What must he have thought of her? He probably considered her a girl who prized wealth above everything else, and rejected a poor suitor simply because he was poor. This idea distressed her. It would not be in good taste for her to confess her love to Midford, but he must be made aware of the fact that she had not allowed his declaration to remain unanswered simply because he was not rich. "He will return," she said to herself; "I must see him again; I must tell him that he is mistaken in me. He will not ask for my hand because I am rich. That is worthy of him; he shall learn that I am not unworthy of him. And when he has learned this, then. . . ." She did not finish her train of thought; but the sadness disappeared suddenly from her features, and smiling confidently to herself, she turned away.

The windows rattled. A carriage was driving under the *porte cochere*. Immediately afterwards Mrs. Comyn entered the room. She threw herself into a chair without removing hat or cloak, remarking that the afternoon had been very tiresome,—that she had made quite a number of calls and that she hoped now no one would disturb her, as she wanted to rest.

"Did Mr. Midford call to see you?" she inquired suddenly.

"Yes. What made you think so?"

"I met him near the house as I was driving away. . . ."

My dear Edith, if you will follow your mother's advice, you will cease to encourage that young man to persevere in his foolish attentions to you."

"Why 'foolish,' mamma?"

Mrs. Comyn turned a look upon her daughter which said distinctly: "Why this idle question?" shrugging her shoulders at the same time. But Edith did not allow herself to be silenced by this pantomime, and repeated her question: "Why foolish, mamma?"

"My dear, as a favor, I beg you not to assume such airs of naive innocence," replied Mrs. Comyn crossly. "You are too old for them. They are not becoming to you. They do not suit either your face or your style."

"Really, I do not understand you."

"Then it is because you will not understand me."

"You are cruel and unjust to me, today. What is it you mean to say?"

"There, there, my dear child! I am tired out and a little nervous. I did not intend to hurt your feelings. I will go to my room now and get rested."

She started to arise; but the next sentence that Edith uttered chained her fast to her chair.

"I think that Mr. Midford loves me. He has just told me so in pretty plain terms."

"The wretch!"

"Mamma! He is the noblest of men, and I—I esteem him higher than anyone else. If he should sue for my hand, I. . . . I would lay it in his with entire confidence."

"*A la bonne heure!* These are very astonishing discoveries which I am making!" Mrs. Comyn had now risen, and stood with angry, threatening mien in front of her daughter. The latter remained calm.

"What is there so astonishing in the communication I have just made to you?" she inquired tranquilly. Are

there no other girls who are loved by young men, and wish to marry them?"

"You marry Mr. Midford! And have you lost your mind? What childish love-affair have you been making up for yourself? I regret, indeed, that I did not overlook your reading more closely. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Midford! A pretty pair! And what would you live on, pray?"

Edith had also lost some of her self-control by this time, and retaliated sharply:

"I have not yet once said that I am going to marry Mr. Midford. I only declared that I should entrust myself confidently to him if he should ask me. The question as to what we should live upon if I were his wife need give you no anxiety, mamma! Mr. Midford is a man who knows how to work, and, besides, I am rich enough...."

"You rich!" exclaimed Mrs. Comyn, contemptuously.

Edith started and looked at her mother with inquiry and alarm in her eyes. The latter had resumed her seat and was drumming impatiently with her slender fingers upon the arms of the chair. At last Edith continued:

"I am not inquisitive, and you will remember that never in my life have I asked you a single question in regard to either your pecuniary affairs or my own. You have never, of your own accord, spoken with me upon the matter...."

"It is not a pleasant subject. I should not have mentioned it even now if your folly had not made me so impatient."

"I have always supposed that I was rich."

"You have nothing!"

"Why have you never given me an explanation of this before?"

"Do not forget the respect due to your mother! I do not owe you any explanation!"

“Heaven keep me from forgetting what I owe you! but remember, mamma, that I am no longer a child. In a few weeks I shall be twenty-one years old. Am I doing wrong when I beg you to tell me now what you will not withhold from me much longer, as it is a matter affecting my life’s happiness?”

Mrs. Comyn stared at her daughter in the greatest astonishment. Never had she allowed herself to imagine that Edith, some day, could demand an account of her, and that she, her mother, would then be compelled to answer. She was by no means a wicked woman. She was, in her way, a kind, tender mother. She had for some years been pursuing but one object in life—that of marrying off her only child brilliantly. She had seen her grow up, but to the mother’s eyes she had always remained “little Edith,” to whom everything that she needed was “given.” For the last few years the mother had been giving her pretty clothes with which to adorn herself, as before that she had brought her the loveliest dolls, to give her pleasure. She had never liked to think that this state of things must cease some day; and now Edith, all of a sudden, had sprung the unexpected question upon her, of what was her *own*, what belonged to her in her own right, without her receiving it as a present from her mother.

Under ordinary circumstances it would have occasioned Mrs. Comyn some embarrassment to reply to this question; but she was now exceptionally excited, and it was not only easy for her, it even afforded her a certain kind of pleasure,—malicious pleasure it might be called,—to make the fact perfectly plain to Edith, in clear and unmistakable terms, that they both, mother and daughter, were about the same as penniless. The property left by the late Mr. Comyn had not been insignificant, but he had

invested the larger part of it badly, and his widow had not been successful in her attempts to repair these losses. For several years now she had been living, not upon her income, but upon her capital, which had rapidly melted away and was now reduced to a comparatively small sum.

“We have still a year, perhaps a year and a half, to live, my child,”—Mrs. Comyn concluded her recital, while she smiled at her daughter exactly as if she had been making her a very delightful communication,—“and if within that time you do not marry, then there will be nothing left for us to do but to go to my relatives and live on their charity. A pleasant outlook! Do you still think that I am wrong in opposing the childish love story that you have just told me?”

Edith experienced a violent desire to protest against the humiliating adjective “childish,” for it was not her way, with her mother, to pass over anything that displeased her; but she controlled herself, and remarked very gravely:

“I should have thought it wrong if you had given me to a husband who believed that I was wealthy and only learned too late that I had nothing.”

“That is another of your romantic ideas; but you talk like an inexperienced child. Men, who want to get married, are well informed individuals. You can be perfectly sure that Mr. Hale, as well as Mr. Welsh, when they proposed to you, were well aware of the fact that they need not look for any dowry with you. But they loved you, and you will yet regret that you did not accept one or the other of them. Your noble Mr. Midford, on the other hand....”

Edith interrupted her:

“Do you mean to say, mamma, that he knows I have no property?”

“Of course that is what I say. He may have been

in love with you for a few minutes ; but he is a calm, prudent man, who knows the value of dollars and cents accurately. He has considered the matter, and come to the conclusion that an alliance with you would be 'Poverty & Co.' Hence he has managed to escape from your trap, and in a very skillful way, evidently, as he has contrived to deceive you completely."

"I never laid any traps for Mr. Midford, and you are doing him a cruel injustice."

"On the contrary, you will realize that I am completely in the right before you are much older. Only wait a little while!"

"I am not impatient, mamma, but I ask you for leave to tell Mr. Midford sometime that I am not rich. You owe it to him to grant me this."

"I owe nothing whatever to Mr. Midford, child!—your fine sentiments keep you floating in a superterrestrial atmosphere! To speak candidly, it does not seem to me quite the thing for you to converse with a strange man about our pecuniary affairs. But if you expect to get any especial satisfaction out of it I will not forbid you. But I should like to request one thing,—that you will not act over-hastily. . . . wait a few days, a week, a fortnight, until you have got over your bad humor."

"I am not in a bad humor; and I will wait, as you require, a fortnight, before I tell Mr. Midford."

"I have not required anything, and if you were not out of temper you would not speak to me as you do. I expressed a wish, and I am very glad that you have acceded to it. . . . and now I will go and rest."

Mrs. Comyn arose and left the apartment. Taken all in all, she was satisfied. She had finally been able to give her daughter an explanation of certain circumstances which had now and then caused her an uneasy hour.

Edith had received the unpleasant announcement that she was poor much more tranquilly than was to have been expected. In her gratification at this fact Mrs. Comyn had almost entirely forgotten what Edith had disclosed in regard to her liking for Midford. When afterwards she recalled this confession to her mind, she said to herself: "Edith is a sensible girl. She will not be so foolish as to encourage further the attentions of a Thomas Midford. I almost regret that I did not tell her long ago that she is absolutely obliged to marry money. Who knows?—perhaps if I had she might be Mrs. Hale or Mrs. Welsh today, and I relieved from all my worries. Well, we have still a whole year before us, and during that time lots of water will run into the sea. I shall now be able to converse with Edith and advise her freely and without reserve. All will yet be well."

*

*

*

Mrs. Comyn had felt a certain timidity in regard to explaining the pecuniary circumstances of the family to her daughter; but after this explanation had taken place, she would have liked to discuss the future with Edith without constraint. It made her uneasy to find that the latter did not refer in any way to the important and disagreeable announcement that had been made to her. Edith appeared to have forgotten the matter, and lived on tranquilly and self-contained. She was constantly thinking of Midford, but she mentioned him no longer. She looked for him in society, at the houses where they had formerly been in the habit of meeting; her eyes continually sought him in the theatre and on the street, and she was very unhappy because she could not discover him anywhere. A feeling of constant, tormenting unrest had taken possession of her; there was a gnawing at her heart which deprived her of

sleep and appetite, so that she became pale and ailing. Mrs. Comyn observed this with distress, but she did not have the courage to put any leading questions to her daughter. Edith had acquired the habit lately of gazing at her steadily and inquiringly, and Mrs. Comyn felt constrained and ill at ease under her daughter's eyes. What was it that she was looking for in her face so attentively?

"Mamma," Edith remarked one day, "I intend to ask Mr. Midford to call on me tomorrow or the day after. A fortnight has passed since we have seen him."

"Are you still thinking of that matter, my dear? I confess frankly that I had completely forgotten Mr. Midford, and was in hopes that you had done the same."

"I have not forgotten Mr. Midford."

"Do not act without due consideration, dear Edith! Reflect that the happiness of your whole life is at stake."

"Just because I have reflected I wish to act. Can you accuse me of precipitation when you see how patiently I have been waiting these two weeks?"

"I did not know that you were waiting. . . . Edith, I do not recognize you any more! You are like another person! From a sensible, intelligent, dutiful girl, you talk now like a morbid novel heroine."

"If a girl has to sell. . . ." She hesitated and began a new sentence: "If a girl has to marry for money if she is not to be considered a novel heroine, then I had rather be one than claim the honorable appellation of a sensible, intelligent girl."

"The first duty of a girl is to be a good daughter. . . . How can you talk to me so? I have never wished for anything but your happiness! Is this the thanks for my love?" Mrs. Comyn prepared to shed a few tears.

"I did not intend to grieve you," answered Edith tranquilly, without showing any emotion. "You need not

fear that I shall offer my love to any man, whoever he may be, and however much I may love him. You can be present when I speak to Mr. Midford."

"As a favor to me, Edith, I beg you not to write to him!"

"I cannot give you that promise. I have kept my word and waited a fortnight. You must now allow me to ascertain the truth in regard to Mr. Midford's character. I only wish to know whether he is worthy of my respect or deserves your contempt."

Mrs. Comyn sighed deeply and left the room. An hour later she sent a servant to inquire of her daughter whether she wished to drive with her. Edith was ready, and soon afterwards the mother and daughter, seated in an elegant open carriage, were driving down the Champs Elysées. As they were crossing the Place de la Concorde, they met an ancient cab, driven by a poorly dressed driver and drawn by a lean and limping apology for a horse. In this sorry-looking vehicle Thomas Midford was seated. Mother and daughter both recognized him; he did not see them. He sat bent over and gazed meditatively into his hat, which he was holding between his knees and turning slowly with both hands. The old cab, the shabby driver, the miserable horse, the absent-minded passenger,—all together presented a forlorn whole. When it had passed, the eyes of the mother and daughter met. Mrs. Comyn nodded her head significantly, and added: "What a future that promises!"

But Edith replied to this with a question: "Does Mr. Midford look as if he were intending to marry for money?"

Mrs. Comyn shrugged her shoulders impatiently, leaned back in the luxurious carriage in her aristocratic way, and, without continuing the conversation, looked at

the brilliant scene around them in the street.

As soon as Edith returned home, she retired to her room to write to Midford. She composed a long letter to him, but tore it up as soon as it was finished, to write another, still longer. In this she made so many alterations and corrections, contrary to her usual custom, that she began to rewrite it again. Before she had finished this task, she was summoned to dinner. She locked the papers carefully away and appeared at the table, to her mother's astonishment, without having changed her dress. During the entire meal she sat silent and abstracted, and soon after dinner she returned to her room to complete the letter she had commenced. Never in her whole life had a bit of writing given her anything like so much trouble as this letter; but she was well contented with her work when it lay at last finished before her. Her large, clear handwriting looked well upon the firm, handsome paper which she had selected from among many kinds of stationery with especial care; and her style, she considered, left nothing to be desired. She congratulated herself upon the sonorous ring of a few isolated, well-turned passages, which she read over to herself in an undertone. She destroyed two envelopes because the "E" in the word "Esq." was not quite to her liking, and at last she laid the completed letter, ready to send away, in one of the drawers of her bureau.

The next morning she read the letter carefully through again, and suddenly she began to doubt in regard to certain ideas which she had expressed so confidently the evening before. Was it becoming in her to give a strange gentleman—for, strictly speaking, what was Mr. Midford more to her than a stranger?—unrequested, information in regard to her circumstances? The fortnight's delay which she had granted her mother would not expire till the fol-

lowing Monday. She made up her mind to consider the whole matter again deliberately. On Monday morning, finally, after she had reread her long letter so often that she knew it by heart, she destroyed it, took a sheet of ordinary note-paper and wrote a few lines in her most rapid penmanship :

“Miss Comyn’s compliments to Mr. Thomas Midford, and she begs him to be so kind as to call upon her this afternoon, between one and two.”

Then she commanded her maid to accompany her, and, with the note in her hand, set forth to seek a *commissionnaire* herself, to whom she could give the letter to be carried to its address. In the hall she encountered her mother.

“Where are you going?” the latter inquired.

“I have a little errand to attend to,” Edith replied, “I shall be home again by breakfast-time.”

Edith frequently went out with her maid, and Mrs. Comyn did not feel herself justified in offering any objections to this early walk.

Edith found a *commissionnaire* in the immediate neighborhood of her home, at the corner of the Rue de Berry. She handed him the letter for Midford.

“Wait for an answer,” she said; “I will be here again in an hour to get the reply.”

The man looked at the address. “I can be back here again in half an hour,” he remarked, “if madame wishes it, and if I am not obliged to wait too long for the answer.”

“Very well! In half an hour, then; but punctually, so that I shall not have to wait. You will get a good *pourboire*.”

The *commissionnaire* hastened away, and Edith, after having looked at her watch, walked with a rapid step down the Champs Elysées, followed by her maid. Arrived at

the *Rond point*, she looked at the clock. Then she turned and retraced her steps, somewhat more slowly than she had left, to the Rue de Berry.

The messenger was already standing at his post. She recognized him at a distance and hastened towards him. The man saw her coming, raised his hat politely and then carefully took a letter from his pocket, which he presented to her. She started violently, for it was her own note that was handed back to her. To the questioning, troubled glance which she cast upon the *commissionnaire*, he replied:

“The gentleman left Paris the evening of day before yesterday. He arranged everything completely before he went and did not leave his new address behind him. Letters that come for him are to be sent to Messrs. Edington & Co.”

Edith only partially comprehended these words. A peculiar, painful faintness came over her. She turned away without having uttered a word, and walked mechanically towards her residence. As she was on the point of entering the house, she noticed that the *commissionnaire* had followed her.

“What do you want?” she asked.

“Excuse me, madame,” the man replied, “My trip has not yet been paid for.”

She opened her portemonnaie and handed him a small gold five-franc piece.

“Where are the letters to be sent?” she inquired.

“To Messrs. Edington & Co., Rue de la Paix.”

“Wait a few minutes. I will send you down a letter, which you must carry at once to Mr. Edington. Bring me the answer here. You can keep what I have given you for both trips.”

The man thanked her, and soon after, with a letter to Mr. Alexander Edington, which the maid had given him,

hastened away to the Rue de la Paix. Edith was pretty well acquainted with Mr. Edington, and had speedily made up her mind to request some information of him in regard to the sudden disappearance of his friend. She had therefore begged him to call upon her in the course of the day. Any time would be convenient for her; he could name any hour. The reply to her note was brought to her as she was sitting at breakfast. Mr. Edington wrote that he would have the honor of paying his respects to Miss Comyn at two o'clock.

Mrs. Comyn frowned when this letter was brought into the apartment. Edith noticed it, but said nothing, however. She was annoyed with her mother, as she held her accountable for the fact that Midford had left Paris without having shown himself again at their house.

After breakfast, which passed in silence, Mrs. Comyn remarked: "In case the letter you have just received is from Mr. Midford, and that he is to call upon you, allow me to remind you that you yourself invited me to be present during your interview with him. Besides, it seems to me only proper, after what has taken place between you."

"This letter is not from Mr. Midford, and Mr. Midford is not coming to see me. He has left Paris.... you were right, mamma...." She smiled bitterly; but of a sudden she was obliged to cease speaking: tears were suffocating her voice.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Comyn uneasily.

"He has gone. I shall never see him again! Oh, how cruel you have been! If I had not listened to your suspicions, if I had not waited weeks, I should have seen him again!" She covered her face with her handkerchief and wept.

Mrs. Comyn, at the bottom of her heart, was much delighted to find that the man whose presence had caused

her so much uneasiness had left Paris. She was not worried by her daughter's tears: "It will pass as it came," she thought. It was easy for her to say a few tender, sympathetic words to Edith, and after she had done this she left the room, as she was convinced that the young girl would console herself most speedily if left to herself.

Alexander Edington made his appearance at two o'clock precisely, with that delightful punctuality which distinguishes the dweller in a large city. Edith did not leave him a moment in doubt as to what she wished to learn from him; for as soon as she had welcomed him and he had taken a seat, she inquired whether he could tell her what had become of Mr. Midford.

"He has returned to California."

"Do you know the reasons for his sudden departure? He did not even find time to say goodbye to us."

"He did not lack plenty of time," Edington rejoined, "for during the last fortnight he has often sat with me in my office, for hours at a time, doing nothing but drawing squares and triangles and shading them with great care. But I am not surprised that he made no farewell calls. Midford usually acts according to certain principles which he has invented for his own private use, during his leisure hours, and which he does not discuss with other people. He thought of you. I know that for a certainty. I know him quite thoroughly; we lived together several years in California, and I know that he only speaks of those persons and things that interest him. He sits so silent and meditates. . . . then of a sudden he puts a question to me. This question is invariably connected with the subject of his profound meditation, and, as I am aware of this fact, I can always calculate tolerably correctly what is going on in his mind."

"And you think that he thought of us?" Edith asked.

“Do not be surprised at my question. I will tell you why I ask it. Mr. Midford was, as you know, quite a frequent visitor at our house during the last few months. Suddenly, about a fortnight ago, he stopped coming, and since then we have only seen him once, that is, day before yesterday. We drove past him; he did not notice us. It seemed to me that he looked as if he were sick and depressed. So I sent this morning to inquire after his health, and thus I learned that he had left Paris.”

Edith had made an effort to speak unconstrainedly. But from the manner in which her young and worldly-wise compatriot had listened to her, she saw that her efforts had not been crowned with especial success. Edington listened, that is, with great attention, and nodded his head from time to time affirmatively, as if to say: “Go on, you interest me”; but upon his features there lay a peculiar, a not exactly friendly, a *knowing* smile, and Edith was conscious herself that under the disturbing influence of this smile, she had lost her self-possession and changed color during the latter part of her little speech.

Alexander Edington was silent for a few moments after Edith had spoken, then answering the thought that was occupying her principally, he said:

“Yes: Midford thought a great deal about you,—I can certify to this on two occasions. The first was about ten days ago, when I remarked to him casually that I was going to meet you that evening in your box at the theatre. He sat silent for awhile and then asked: ‘What number?’ ‘Thirteen,’ I replied. ‘An unlucky number,’ he rejoined. To which I again: ‘I hope, nevertheless, to have a good time.’ He did not reply and soon took his departure. That evening he was in the theatre. He was sitting in the darkest parquet box, and I only discovered him accidentally. He is usually no theatre-goer. I am not one of

those persons who take pleasure in causing other people unnecessary embarrassment; consequently I did not ask my friend the next morning what had taken him to the theatre; but I was necessarily impressed by the calm way in which he listened, while I was telling him about the play, as if he were hearing something new. Then, a few days later, I informed him that I should see you during the evening at the Sands'. The next day when he came to see me, he inquired: 'How was it last night at the Sands?'' 'Lovely.' 'Who was there?' I named over a dozen persons and, purposely, I did not mention your name. 'Were the Comyns there?' he asked. 'Yes, they were there, too.' 'Did Miss Comyn dance?' 'No.' 'How did she look?' 'Very cheerful, as usual.'"

"Do I always look so cheerful?" interrupted Edith impatiently.

Edington did not answer and continued his account:

"How was Miss Comyn dressed?' Midford inquired further. I described your toilette, and then I added: 'Since when, Thomas Midford, have you been taking an interest in ladies' dresses?' 'Yes, yes,' he answered musingly, 'I take an interest, now and then, in certain things that you don't know about.' 'Among the rest, in Miss Comyn,' I remarked. Thereupon he arose and said with extreme sadness: 'Alexander Edington, I wish I were already at the other end of the world.'"

Edith cast down her eyes. Edington, as if he did not notice her embarrassment, went on:

"I should not have mentioned anything of this, Miss Comyn, if you had not made inquiries of me in regard to Thomas Midford; but as the young man in question is about my oldest and best friend, to whom I wish every happiness, and whose suffering wounds me also, I will add in conclusion, that. . . . he loves you. . . ." Edith started.

Edington continued almost contemptuously :

“There is no danger in it now—he has gone.”

“On a long and dreary way.” murmured Edith musingly.

“Yes, on a long and dreary way, a hard and a difficult one.” Edington spoke with greater emotion than he had ever before displayed in Edith’s presence. “How heavy his poor heart must be ! Miss Comyn pardon me Miss Comyn, if I had been in your place I would not have repulsed that man, I would not have let him go.”

Edith looked up and, with tears in her eyes, said : “You are mistaken you are a true friend I did not repulse him ; I did not let him go. He has gone away without my knowledge, against my wishes !” And suddenly she broke into tears and sobbed : “Ah, if he were only back again !”

Then Alexander Edington arose and, taking Edith’s hand, exclaimed with evident emotion :

“I have done you injustice in my mind ; but I do not regret it. I will make everything all right again ; you can rely upon me.”

When Mrs. Comyn returned about four o’clock from her usual drive, she was not a little surprised to find Mr. Edington, who she knew had come about two, still with her daughter. She was, however, not rendered uneasy by this fact. Quite the contrary : Alexander Edington was not, indeed, so wealthy as Mr. Hale or Mr. Welsh, and not so aristocratic as the Marquis de Contades or the Viscount de Beauchamp ; but he was a well-established, ambitious young man, who already possessed quite a handsome fortune, and was generally considered as bound to rise to a high financial position in time. Mrs. Comyn wished him good day, and added that he was far too chary of his visits and that he must come and dine with them, quite *en*

famille, some day during the week, an invitation of which the young banker promised to avail himself soon.

After he had left, Edith retired to her room and began again to write; but this time her pen flew over the paper, and before the mail closed that day, Mr. Edington received a thick letter which was addressed to "Thomas Midford, Esq., via New York," and which Mr. Edington mailed that same evening. He, too, had been favored by Miss Comyn with a few lines. They read:

"DEAR FRIEND,—Enclosed you will find the letter for Mr. Midford. I have written it exactly according to your advice. It is to be hoped that your mediation will benefit your friend as well as myself. Thanking you for your kindness, I remain

Sincerely and devotedly yours,

E. C."

Alexander Edington was a very busy and a very systematic man. He made it a principle never to preserve a single unnecessary scrap of written paper, and his private letters were in most cases destroyed as soon as he had answered them or mastered their contents. But Edith Comyn's little note, although it did not contain anything especially interesting, was not only read by Edington with the greatest attention, but was then carefully refolded and placed in a drawer, which he afterwards locked, exactly as if it had been a very important and valuable document.

*

*

*

The village of Blighton Bar, in the State of California, was indeed only a few months old; yet, nevertheless, it had already attained to quite a respectable size. A few hundred miners made there, by the sweat of their brow, much more than their daily bread,—they made enough, that is, to consume every day in the way of food and drink, in the principal saloon of the place, twice to three

times as much as an epicure of the highest order would have to pay for his board at Delmonico's in New York; enough to sit half the night at the faro table and lose or win there hundreds of dollars as the case might be, now and then even thousands, at one sitting.

The majority of the populace consisted of native-born Americans, old Californians, who had already lived in nobody knew how many different "mining camps," and of whom more than one had ere this amassed several handsome fortunes, which they had lost again almost as rapidly. Mingled with them were some Germans, Irishmen and South Americans. Almost all were young, vigorous men, slow and decided in their movements, with tranquil, clear, fearless eyes, whose gaze was peculiarly slow-moving, as with people whom no one has a right to command, and who turn with placid composure when they are called.

The stage from San Francisco arrived at Blighton Bar punctually every evening between the hours of six and half-past, and its arrival, as the event of the day, was always awaited, if with apparent patience, yet with great suspense, by a large crowd of miners, whose labors were at an end for the day.

One sultry July evening the stage came in as usual at its favorite "tempo," of which the inhabitants of Blighton Bar were almost as proud as the skillful driver himself,—at a furious gallop, that is—and drew up with admirable and admired precision immediately in front of the Post Office, namely, the principal saloon of the place. The driver,—a man with a broad, smoothly-shaven, serious visage,—threw the reins to a stable-boy, descended with some difficulty from his seat, divested himself solemnly of his right hand bright scarlet glove, and, without saying a word, shook hands with a few privileged friends who had drawn near. Then, with visible enjoyment, he emptied a large glass,

filled with an ice-cold, foaming beverage, which had been handed to him respectfully, and at the same time familiarly, by a waiter who had come out from the saloon. He smacked his lips as if well pleased, took a square, gay-colored cloth out of his hat, wiped his mouth with it, and then said, casting a benevolent glance around, and, as if addressing everyone present—"How do you do?" Whereupon, without awaiting a reply, he stepped to the stage door. This had already been opened from within, and a solitary passenger had set foot upon the soil of Blighton Bar. The miners, the saloon-keeper and the waiter were all surveying him with undivided attention and some astonishment. What was *that* man doing in Blighton Bar? He did not look like any of them; he did not seem like a man who could fight successfully the hard battle of life alone,—who could boldly strike in, boldly seize and boldly retain.

The new-comer, a young man still in his twenties, with a thoughtful countenance, in which a pair of tranquil brown eyes were especially noticeable, looked like a city gentleman, and was dressed as such. He seemed somewhat abashed by the ponderous gaze which the miners as it were hung upon his figure, following each one of his movements with a kind of curious listlessness, and tried to conceal his embarrassment by turning to watch the unloading from the stage of a not very heavy leather trunk and a few pieces of smaller hand baggage, as directed by the driver. After he had seen all his possessions gathered together at his feet, he finally turned to the still intently-observing spectators, and, lifting his hat, and looking straight into the eyes of the one who stood nearest him, he asked politely, in a low tone of voice:

"Will you be so kind as to tell me where Mr. George Warden lives?"

"Warden!" exclaimed the one addressed, half turning

around,—“Wanted!”

A broad-shouldered giant, with bold, weather-beaten, northern features, who had been leaning carelessly against the door frame, his brawny arms crossed upon his breast and a stub pipe in his mouth, gave a slight push with his back against the door, so that, without a too great expenditure of strength, he was able to assume a vertical position, and then stepped slowly forward, saying with quiet composure :

“George Warden is my name.”

The new-comer took a letter from his pocket, which he handed to Mr. Warden. The latter tore open the envelope, glanced through the contents of a short letter within in a few seconds, and said, extending his hand with an energetic gesture :

“Delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Midford. How are you? Come with me.” Midford, by a silent gesture, drew attention to his luggage.

“Allow me to attend to that,” Warden observed. He turned to the bystanders and, beckoning to one of them, remarked pleasantly, but with the assured tone of a man who is not accustomed to asking favors in vain :

“You will be so kind, Croker, as to see that these things are carried to my shanty.”

“That’s all right,” replied the person addressed.

George Warden knew what was the proper thing to do. “Now a glass for welcome, Mr. Midford,” he said cordially. “Be so kind as to name it.”

Midford, who was by no means a stranger to California, replied with a polite gesture: “Whatever you prefer, sir.”

Warden called out something to the waiter, who thereupon, with great zeal and earnestness, proceeded to concoct a drink, the preparation of which required the employ-

ment of several glasses and various fluids, and then he handed to each of the two gentlemen, who stood silently and attentively watching him, a large glassful of a reddish beverage.

“Good, after a hot day,” Warden observed. He touched his glass gently and carefully to Midford’s, and saluting him with a wink, and at the same time a slight inclination of his head, he added: “Yours!”

“Yours!” Midford replied.

Each thereupon emptied his glass: Warden his at one draught, with eyes closed affectionately and a glorified smile upon his countenance; Midford, with several brief intermissions, and not without turning somewhat red in the face, for what he was drinking burned his throat like fire. Then both departed, shoulder to shoulder, with solemn tread; Midford with his head bent forward, his hands behind him; Warden swinging from hip to hip, his thumbs in the wide leather belt that girded him loosely, in which a heavy navy revolver and a bowie-knife of immense size were hanging.

The next day George Warden introduced his esteemed friend, “Mr. Thomas Midford, of New York,” to the most prominent members of the community of Blighton Bar, and in the course of the evening all those who wished to know learned that the new-comer had been most warmly recommended to Mr. George Warden by a letter from his old “pard,” Peter O’Connor, of White Pine, and that the former, Mr. George Warden, most respectfully requested his estimable and highly esteemed fellow-citizens to be so kind as to apply to him in case that any one of them, for any possibly imaginable cause, should wish to enter into any kind of a quarrel with Mr. Midford. It was already late when Mr. Warden slowly and solemnly, and with a somewhat thick utterance, delivered this last remark, so rich in adverbs and

adjectives, accompanying it with many powerful blows of his fist upon the table; and as it was well known that Mr. George Warden, at this time of night, did not bear contradiction mildly, and was in the habit of becoming somewhat quarrelsome in general, several of those still remaining in the saloon hastened to shake hands in the most cordial manner with Mr. Thomas Midford and to assure him of their sincere friendship.

During the next few days Warden was much occupied in observing and studying his new friend with attention, as occasion offered. One evening he addressed him as follows:

“You are not strong enough for mining; you have neither the eye nor the hand to run a faro-bank; as a sheriff you would not manage the ‘boys’ very well, although I admit freely that you have no fear; there are already two too many saloon-keepers in the place, as all the respectable citizens of Blighton Bar get drunk in the same saloon, the Post Office; there is at present no demand for a preacher or teacher; you have never learned any regular trade; the public offices are all filled;—What can I do with you, you young, helpless, interesting little orphan? You shall become a banker; my banker and the banker of half a dozen reliable fellows that I will bring to you. Other customers will follow; and, as you neither play nor drink, as you have already told me,—what do you do, anyway, man, if you do not care either for the bottle or for cards?—then something very strange will have to happen to prevent your becoming the wealthiest of us all.”

Midford raised a few objections. He had already made some inquiries. The banking business in Blighton Bar was not without its risks. “I have only a very little money,” he continued. “If I should lose, I could not

make it good."

Warden looked him over from head to foot, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head: "Have you come here to lose money?" he asked. "Young man, what sort of ideas are you inventing now? You do simply and systematically what your business brings you to do, and don't worry yourself about anything further. What's the use of borrowing trouble? Care is a bad bedfellow."

Midford was no match for his companion's solid arguments, and yielded. During the next few days he complied with some simple formalities to which Warden drew his attention, and at the end of the week he rejoiced in the pleasant sensation that his house in Blighton Bar enjoyed the undisputed title of a "respectable firm." His new business did not give him much to do: he had to write a few letters to the bank in San Francisco every day, to weigh and seal a few bags of "dust," to write out a few receipts, now and then advancing money on them, and occasionally giving information in regard to the rates of exchange from San Francisco upon New York or London. During his hours of leisure he meditated and worried and dreamed, as was his way, or he made friends for himself, without intending to do so, among the miners—his customers and fellow-citizens—simply by conversing with them. He met Warden the most frequently, and varied and profound were the long conversations which they were in the habit of having together.

Warden, by his quiet, unabashed questioning, had managed to get from Midford the outlines of his simple story, and since then seemed to have conceived a kind of paternal, compassionate affection for his diffident, hesitating, awkward guest. He frequently conversed with him about that "girl in Paris," whose name Midford had not mentioned, and whom he, for some inscrutable reason, had

christened "Jemima." Midford was always ready to enter into conversation about the absent lady of his love, and therefore became more and more confidential with Warden. But while the latter in time came to know in detail all the particulars of Midford's love affair, as well as his plans for the future, Midford had no suspicion as to whence his new friend had come, nor whither he was going. One day, incidentally,—for he was not inquisitive—he addressed a few questions to Warden in regard to his past life:

"Where do you come from, anyway?" he asked. "You talk sometimes like a professor of philosophy and quote the classics like a real litterateur. Where were you born? What schools did you attend?"

"That, and other things like it, no one has ever been able to find out," Warden replied, in his most listless manner. "There are unexplained mysteries in nature. Why, for instance, do pilots wear double-lined velvet vests buttoned up to their chin, when they come ashore in the glowing noontide heat? Mystery! No one can explain it."

Midford was not curious to raise the veil from over the past of his friend and benefactor. He made a deprecating gesture with his hand, remarking as he did so, "Assume that I have not spoken"; and afterwards he never recurred to the history of Warden's life.

One evening, in the latter part of the month of August, the mail brought a letter to Midford, which bore the postmark "Paris," among several others, whose original address, "New York," had been crossed out and changed several times. The letter had been seeking the one to whom it was addressed at different places for months, until finally it had reached him. Midford recognized the well-known handwriting of his friend Alexander Edington upon the envelope. He opened the letter. The first thing that met his eyes was a sheet of paper upon which was nothing

but the line, "My best wishes and congratulations! A. E. Paris, 26, 5, 6." Then Midford saw a second letter, and his heart gave a great throb.

"A letter from Jemima?" asked Warden, who, standing near Midford, had been observing him with his usual kindly and imperturbable attention.

Midford made an assenting gesture, whereupon Warden turned away, apparently without further interest, so that the other could read his love-letter undisturbed.

When the two met again in Warden's shanty a few hours later, Midford's countenance was beaming with joy.

"You have received good news, I see," said Warden.

"The best that I could possibly wish for," Midford replied.

He drew Edith's letter from his pocket, and reading portions of it here and there aloud, communicated to his friend the entire contents of the long epistle.

Edith wrote that she had been painfully surprised by Midford's departure and that she had sought an explanation of this unexpected occurrence from Mr. Edington. He had considered it advisable to make certain communications to her in regard to Midford's sentiments for her, of which she could not speak further at present, but which she had involuntarily connected with what Midford had said to her during his last interview with her in Paris. She had by these means arrived at the conclusion that Midford, at that time, was in error regarding certain circumstances affecting her personally.

"You believed that I was rich," Edith's letter continued: "I am not rich; it seems, on the contrary, that we are about the same as penniless. My mother only recently informed me of this fact, and Mr. Edington believes that this piece of news will have an interest for you also. I do

not know whether he is mistaken in this or not; at any rate, I have no cause to withhold the truth from you.

“I must write you something else. It will be difficult for me to do so, although at bottom it is only a very simple matter, namely, to make you acquainted with my opinion on a certain question which you touched upon. I hope confidently that you will not misunderstand me.

“You said to me that a man who is poor, and has no prospect of becoming rich, would be acting ignominiously if he were to sue for the hand of a wealthy girl. I think otherwise:—a man who loves ought to accept, with the girl, everything that she brings him,—riches as well as poverty. The same applies also to the woman, according to my ideas: she should go to him whom she loves, if he woos her, unconcerned whether he is rich or poor. A girl who would hesitate to give an honest man her hand because he is poor, while she would grant it to him if he were a man of wealth,—such a girl cannot be good and cannot be noble.

“These ideas have not recently occurred to me, but I never found an opportunity to express them before to you. The thought that my silence in this respect may have been falsely interpreted by you is painful to me, and for this reason I have determined to tell you this now.

“Mr. Edington has volunteered to forward this letter to you. He tells me that you will receive it in the month of July, possibly even somewhat later, as he does not know exactly where you have gone from San Francisco. In any case, our mutual friend assures me an answer from you can reach Paris by the beginning of winter—and we are now in the beginning of summer! How far away you have gone, Mr. Midford!

“We shall go to Trouville or Biarritz during the hot weather, but after the middle of October we expect to be

back in our old *Quartier* at Paris. With sincere wishes for your prosperity, I remain, Mr. Midford, your friend,

EDITH COMYN."

Warden had listened with the greatest attention, and sat lost in thought for awhile, when Midford had ceased to speak. Then he said in a low voice: "I was not written to like that." Then he rubbed his forehead rapidly and vehemently, passed his hand through his thick, brown hair, smoothing it down at the back of his head, and after he had in this mechanical way dismissed his fruitless thoughts of bygone times, he continued:

"You are a lucky dog, Thomas Midford! You hold the highest trump card in the pack—the love of a good girl. If you do not win the game, it will be your own fault."

"What would you reply to this letter?" inquired Midford.

"You don't know what you ought to reply to it!" exclaimed Warden, amazed and indignant. "Have you no blood in your veins, man? Are you a hundred years old? Must I tell you what to write? Write!" And without giving his companion a chance to reply, he continued with great precision, as if he were dictating:

"My only and above everything else beloved Jemima, —exclamation point; 'only' and 'above everything else' underscored;—'You can rely with confidence upon the fact that I—if the next steamer from New York to Liverpool does not break down, collide with an iceberg, or go to the bottom in some other unforeseen and unaccountable way, and I thus prevented, by circumstances over which I have no control, from arriving in Paris as soon as I would wish—that I will be by your side a week after this letter reaches you, and that, three weeks later,—that is, if the delay appointed by the law cannot be still further abbreviated,—I hope to be able to clasp my beloved wife in my

arms. Your most grateful, faithfully and eternally devoted Thomas Midford.' Besides this letter a telegram with the following contents: 'Thousand thanks! Letter and writer on the way.' There, Thomas Midford! Any other or any better advice I cannot give you; and whom I cannot advise I cannot help!"

Thereupon Mr. George Warden arose and, with a more rapid step than usual, made a bee-line for the saloon, where he at once swallowed two large glasses of his favorite drink and then began to play so recklessly high and with such unheard-of luck, that he broke the bank and would have taken a fortune home with him if he had not shown himself so ready and indefatigable in giving his revenge to any and every one who requested it of him. As it was, his pockets were still tolerably full when he set out upon his way home, after the break of day.

Midford was awakened by Warden's heavy tread when the latter entered the shanty where the two, comrade fashion, had pitched their tent together.

"Here!" said Warden gruffly, emptying his pockets upon the roughly-hewn table,—“here! I have won this for you. If you will not accept it outright, you can pay it back to me later. I do not need it and can wait till it suits you to give it back. I am nowhere better off than in Brighton Bar; but you are in a hurry and must set out at once for Paris. Don't write; simply telegraph, and start tomorrow. Give my compliments to Jemima and bring her out here on your wedding tour. I am anxious to see that phenomenon, a girl who can love a poor man when she has her choice among a dozen rich suitors.”

Midford replied irresolutely: “It would not be honorable in me to take you at your word. You are excited now; you might, perhaps, when you came to think it over,

regret what you now so generously wish to do. We will talk it over tomorrow, when you are calmer."

"Go to the devil with your honor and your generosity and your calmness! Take it, I tell you again. Don't let your luck pass you by!"

"It will not do. . . . not so quickly," Midford rejoined. "Let me have time to think it over."

"Well, then," said Warden angrily, "Take time, honorable man; sleep on it two or three nights; turn it over thoroughly in your mind; argue out conscientiously all the possible pros and all the possible cons, and then, too late, decide upon doing something that will not pay for the trouble of doing. God in Heaven!—The man has the highest trump cards in his hand and he proposes to play a wretched little low card, instead of sweeping the board at one stroke. It is now bright daylight. You have provoked me out of all desire to sleep. I will go to work. Goodbye till we meet again!"

Warden departed and left Midford to his thoughts. The miner's fine speeches had done no good; they had only troubled Midford's happiness and confidence. He moved, as usual, slowly through the camp, with head cast down, and thought and speculated until his brain was in a whirl. Warden's money he would not accept. "I cannot take it as a present," he argued, "and neither ought I to borrow it." He read Edith's letter over and over again, until finally he found in it what was not really there. Was it so certain that she loved him? Might she not have written simply in order to tell him that she was not such a contemptible creature as her silence might possibly have caused him to believe? How would she take a letter that proceeded upon the supposition that she had declared her love to him. Might he not wound her

sensibly by so doing? No, he ought not to write to her in the way that Warden had advised. She was justified in expecting that he, Midford, should first sue for her love. He composed a long letter in his mind with which he was well pleased. He hastened into the shanty to write it, but as soon as he had taken the pen in his hand all the fine ideas and the elegantly turned phrases vanished from his memory. He hesitated even in the superscription of his letter. At last it proceeded laboriously forward. Much that he wished to say he did not dare to express plainly and unmistakably. A peculiar diffidence prevented him from laying bare his inmost sentiments. There are persons who can write passionate letters in cold blood; others, though profoundly moved, grow cold during the mechanical labor of writing, and confine themselves in their letters within narrow, formal bounds. Most persons are worse and colder than their letters; a few are better and warmer. The perspiration of anguish broke out on his brow as he wrote. He would have liked to cry "I love you!" but it was utterly repugnant to his whole nature to place such words upon paper.

He commenced by thanking Edith for her letter. He did not venture to hint in any way that he applied to himself the young girl's remark that she considered it despicable to reject the hand of a poor suitor, simply because he was poor. He feared, if he did this, to wound Edith's maidenly modesty, her womanly dignity. It was his duty to accept Edith's observation literally, that it was only a question of informing Midford of her opinion upon a certain subject. But he allowed himself to say that now, having learned the fact that Edith was not rich, he had no longer any reason for not attempting to win her. Arrived at this point in his letter, he hesitated a long time. He wanted to offer Edith his heart and hand in plain terms.

At last he found these terms. They read as follows, after long, laborious study :

“I do not know whether I have the right to beg you to cast in your lot with mine, after I have candidly confessed to you that my pecuniary affairs do not justify me in giving you the firm assurance that your life with me would be pleasant and free from care, from a material point of view. But I must not consider this question too much, as I am afraid that I should finally be obliged to give it a negative answer, and it is my most fervent desire to avoid this. I must venture in order to win ; and in the hope of winning the highest prize in life for me, yourself, I venture to ask whether you will trust yourself with me. If you will do this, I shall have but one task in life—that of making you happy ; and if you can love me, I hope that I can succeed in performing this task. Be so kind as to let me have your answer in New York, as I propose to leave here in a short time, and hope to be in Paris before the close of the year. Please remember me kindly till then, and accept the assurance of my unswerving fidelity and devotion.

THOMAS MIDFORD.”

When Midford had corrected his long letter, and copied it in his finest handwriting, he read it through again, and was not satisfied with the result of his labor. It was an honest, stupid letter, which he could have posted up on the Town Hall, without compromising Edith in the slightest ; but he felt that he could not write anything else, or at least anything better or warmer, so, resigned and discouraged, he carried his letter to the postoffice, after having enclosed it in a second envelope, addressed to his friend Alexander Edington.

“Suppose I had written a letter such as Warden dictated !” he thought to himself. “No ! That I could not

have done ! I cannot pretend to be different from what I am ; and Edith must take me so, or reject me !”

Warden, who was sitting on a bench in front of the postoffice, meditatively puffing dense clouds of tobacco smoke into the clear, still evening air, gently clapped approval, as he saw Midford slip a letter into the box. Then he made his friend a signal to follow him, and, rising, he walked slowly away from the saloon.

“How did you write ?” he inquired of Midford when the two had gone far enough away to be able to speak to each other unobserved.

Midford readily replied ; but as he described it, he modified still more the tone of his letter, which had been none too enthusiastic at best.

Warden sighed and stood still, surveying his companion from head to foot attentively, exactly as if he were seeing him for the first time ; then he exclaimed :

“You cannot help it, that you have brown eyes ; neither is it your fault that, after all your balancing and pondering, you never dare to do anything right, and therefore will never win a prize worth having. One must take you as you are !”

“That is just what I said to myself,” Midford eagerly replied, “and I put it to your conscience whether it is not better for the young lady to learn the truth now, than for me to give her the right, by my silence, to reproach me later with having deceived her.”

“Yes, yes ; you are right ! God forbid that I should argue with a man like you !”

Warden walked on in silence at Midford’s side for awhile ; then he turned again to his companion :

“The disease that you are suffering from seems to be contagious, as I notice that in your society I, too, get to racking my brains. I have just been trying to make out

the real cause of my taking an interest in you, and I have found it out now. It is not exactly flattering to you, but I will not keep it from you: I care for you because I do not take the slightest pleasure in concerning myself about myself, and because, as I am constituted, it is a necessity for me to concern myself about something or somebody. Do you know when a man is old? It is when his own fate affects him no longer, and when the thought of the past renders him indifferent for himself and soft-hearted for others. I am an old man."

"You!" exclaimed Midford in amazement.

"Yes; that is, judging by the symptoms I have just been describing. You are still in your salad days, Thomas Midford. If you should ever grow old, you will then find out that all your hypercritical reasoning, your honorableness, was nothing but youthful egotism. If it had been possible for you to have concerned yourself a little less about your blessed self, you would have taken into consideration today what you owe that girl in Paris; but in fact you only racked your brains about the possible unpleasantnesses that might arise for you if you should act somewhat audaciously. You were far more afraid of the reproaches that Jemima might make you some day, than that she should become unhappy through you. I am sorry, Thomas Midford, to have to rob you, perhaps, of some of your cherished illusions, but I cannot help telling you that from sheer honesty and timidity you are more cowardly and selfish than you imagine to yourself, or than I would have believed possible."

All this was grist to Midford's mill. He did not repel the accusation, but rubbed his forehead and said:

"Very likely you are right. I am a useless, weak creature. I have never accomplished anything in particular, and I know that I never can do anything great

Hence it must be my endeavor at least not to injure others."

He spoke with such resignation that Warden would have liked to recall what he had said. He wanted to bring Midford into a less dreary train of thought:

"Don't go to creating new anxieties for yourself," he said. "We are, once for all, just what we are. You have brown eyes and a worrying disposition. It is just as impossible for you to give yourself a light heart as to change the color of your eyes. Now, you only worry for yourself,—just because you are young. In a few years you will worry for others. Care is life."

"An old friend once told me that a life full of cares was more endurable than an empty life," interrupted Midford.

"Your old friend was right. When you write to him give him George Warden's compliments."

"He died long ago."

"That will also happen to me some day. In the meanwhile I shall continue to waste my life in Blighton Bar with drinking and gambling; and whatever I can spare beyond and in spite of this, in the way of caring for any one, that I will present to you."

He was silent for a long while and then said: "As a favor to me, I want you to accept that money I offered you early this morning."

"Thank you," Midford replied with evident emotion, "but be consistent and take me as I am. Let me have time to think the matter over."

Warden shrugged his shoulders, but gave no other sign of impatience. He emptied the short wooden pipe which he had smoked out, by knocking it against the heel of his boot, and replied:

"Suit yourself, Hans, the Dreamer!"

“Why, years ago that was my nickname! How did you happen to come across it?”

“Because you deserve it, young man.”

During the next few days Midford occupied himself almost exclusively in arranging his money matters. It had become apparent that the banking business established under Warden's protection promised to yield in time a certain secure income. Midford's chief creditor resided in New York. He wrote to him with the request that he would send a reliable and capable man to Blighton Bar who could represent him, Midford, during a protracted absence. The creditor, Mr. Simmons, was quite willing to aid Midford in his attempt to discharge his obligations to himself, and sent to Blighton Bar a Mr. James Cope, who had shown himself both intelligent and honest in Mr. Simmons' office, to take charge of Mr. Midford's business temporarily.

Mr. Cope presented himself before his new principal, Mr. Midford, in the early part of the month of October, and was introduced by the latter to George Warden, who, it is unnecessary to say, had previously been consulted, and had promised to extend the favor of his continued protection to Midford's representative. Cope was then instructed by Midford and Warden, and introduced by them to the patrons of the bank; and not until all this had been carefully looked after, with zeal but without undue haste, was Midford ready at last to carry out his plan of returning to Paris, fully six weeks after the receipt of Edith's letter.

When he stood before Warden, ready to bid him good-bye, dressed in the old gray traveling suit in which he had arrived at Blighton Bar, the miner was visibly affected.

“We have been together only three months, in fact,” he said, “but I have seen more of you than one usually sees of his best friends in three years in the city, and I

shall miss you. I shall feel perfectly alone when you have left. Keep a good place in your memory for me, and let us see you here again as soon as convenient. If everything goes well with you, I shall rejoice with you; and if your affair does not turn out as you wish, then in your trouble you will find a true comrade in me. Do not be too much chagrined if luck should be against you. Ten years hence it will be all pretty much the same, however things may have gone in their time; so it is sensible to take them quietly right from the start."

He looked around in the shanty. "I should like to give you something to take with you to remember me by," he continued, "only I cannot find anything that you could use or that would give you pleasure. These little ornaments"—he pointed to his revolver and knife—"would not help you to make a show in Paris. But I will at least do one thing to prove to you, for good and all, that I count upon not being forgotten by you, even without any reminders on my part."

He took a piece of paper, covered with writing, from the large pocket-book that he was in the habit of carrying, and tore it into many small pieces.

"That is your note," he observed, smiling well-pleased. "It took a great deal of pains to force the money upon you, and you took a great deal of pains in composing that model document in which you acknowledged yourself my debtor. There go pains and work and document!"

He tossed the scraps of paper into the air, and watched them fluttering hither and thither until they settled upon the floor. "There you see the use of worrying. Now you are my debtor, verbally alone. So I have had my own way after all."

Midford looked at him in consternation. At that moment the waiter from the saloon came hurrying in and

announced that the stage was on the point of starting. The driver had already drawn on his left glove. Midford had not a minute to lose if he did not wish to be left in Blighton Bar. He pressed his friend's hand in silence and hastened away. But the great strong Warden threw himself upon his bed, his face turned to the wall, and when he heard the driver crack his whip he covered his ears with his hands and groaned aloud.

* *

The fashionable world of Paris had not as yet entirely returned to the capital; but several *salons*, especially those of the foreign colonies, had already opened their doors again, and old acquaintances, who had not seen each other during the summer, were meeting in them, cordially greeting each other after the long separation, and mutually relating what had befallen them at the watering places and in the country. Everyone seemed delighted that the vacation had passed at last, and that winter, with its fatiguing round of pleasures, stood again at the door. It was in the early part of the month of November.

Mrs. Comyn and her daughter were already settled in Paris. They had spent part of the summer at Trouville and had enjoyed themselves very much there in the society of Mr. Alexander Edington. Their amiable compatriot had dined with them every day, taken long walks and drives with the mother and daughter, and, not unfrequently, had conversed with Edith for hours at a time. The shrewd Mrs. Comyn thought that she knew what the young people wished to talk about, and had not made it a difficult matter for them to see each other alone. One day towards the end of September a telegram had recalled Edington to Paris, and from there he had written to Mrs. Comyn that important business interests made it necessary

for him to start without delay for New York. He recommended himself to the friendly remembrance of both the two ladies, and hoped to see them again in Paris at the beginning of November.

This letter disconcerted Mrs. Comyn exceedingly, for she had reckoned with certainty that Mr. Edington would "declare himself" before their return to Paris; but she was a woman who knew how to put a good face on a bad matter, and accommodated herself to the inevitable; so that when she handed her daughter the letter from Paris she restricted herself to the remark, "It is a pity that now we are left to our own resources, until the end of the season."

Edith had carelessly replied: "Yes, it is a pity." But Trouville seemed to have lost its charm for her, and when, soon after, Mrs. Comyn inquired whether she felt inclined to return to Paris, she had replied in the affirmative without hesitation. It was now a fortnight since mother and daughter had again taken up their residence in the little *hotel* on the Champs Elysées. There, one morning, they each received a communication from Alexander Edington. The letter to Mrs. Comyn simply announced that the writer, having brought his business in New York to a successful conclusion, expected to leave America within a week.

"I hope soon after that to see you in Paris," the letter concluded, "and I hope to be welcomed there by you with the same kindness that you showed me during our common sojourn in Trouville. It will always be my most earnest endeavor to remain worthy of your friendship."

Mrs. Comyn smiled in a satisfied manner when she had read this letter. Young Americans are not, as a general rule, very lavish of their communications, especially to elderly ladies; and Mrs. Comyn said to herself, that as

Mr. Edington wrote to her so courteously, it was probably owing to the fact that he still had some favor to ask of her. As to the nature of this favor Mrs. Comyn had not a doubt. The letter to Edith read as follows :

“MY DEAR MISS COMYN :

“Your mother, to whom I have just written, will tell you that I hope to be in Paris a week after this letter. I will now proceed to tell you, in accordance with our agreement, what I have been able to learn here in regard to our friend Thomas Midford. He only remained a few days in New York, and then left for California. Then he seems to have lived in San Francisco a few weeks and afterwards in Sacramento. No one could tell me anything certain upon this point, as Midford had only written a single letter to my friends, and that in the month of July, to inform them that he was settled in Blighton Bar. Your letter must have certainly reached him, for the head of our house tells me that he remembers forwarding to our agent in San Francisco a letter from me to Thomas Midford, and having instructed the agent later to forward the letter to Blighton Bar. If I am not deceived in my calculations, you could already have received Midford’s reply.

“In regard to the health and spirits of our friend, I have not been able to ascertain anything of interest. The head of our house here informs me that Midford called upon him one day, and remained a full half-hour ; but he did nothing during this time but glance over the newspapers, and only as he was leaving did he remark, quite incidentally, that he was going to San Francisco and would write from there to give his new address. He waited six weeks before doing this. He appears from this hardly to have counted upon anyone’s writing him from Paris ; at any rate, he did not manifest any impatience to receive letters from there. I am almost inclined to be angry with him when I find how calmly he has acquiesced in his fate.

“I have often thought of our sojourn in Trouville. The days which I spent there with you were the most charming of my whole life, and I can never forget them.

“Your sincere and devoted friend,

“ALEXANDER EDINGTON.”

Edith perused the first part of this letter with great tranquillity, but the blood rushed to her cheeks as she read the last few lines. She went to her room and weighed every word of this brief extract. The remainder of the letter did not appear to interest her. Only one other passage engaged her attention equally,—that in which Edington wrote as if blaming his friend, to a certain degree, that Midford did not seem to have expected any communications from Paris, and that he had acquiesced in his fate with complete resignation.

For some weeks now the thought of the letter which Edith had written to Thomas Midford had become a painful one to her; but until now she had not dared to confess this even to herself. Now she acknowledged candidly to herself that she regretted having written the letter; and she was provoked with Edington that he had abetted her in doing so. Like a delightful hope, the idea dawned upon her that what she wrote might have been lost. How otherwise was it to be explained that Midford had not yet sent a reply? But then suddenly her mind reverted to his departure from Paris. He had left without bidding his friends goodbye, and Alexander Edington had told her at the time that Midford was accustomed to act according to certain principles which he had invented for his own private use; one need never be astonished at anything he did or left undone. Midford's image rose up before her mind. How changed it was! What could it have been that pleased her in that insignificant, silent man? Her mother had had a clearer vision. She had seen him as he was in reality,—awkward, bashful, peculiar, and tiresome. She recalled the two last interviews they had had together. He had delivered a philosophical discourse on consistent and inconsistent courtships. He was, without any question, a good, honorable man. She wished him

every happiness. She wanted to look up to the man of her choice; he ought to be a support for her. Midford?—She felt herself stronger than he. If some misfortune were to overwhelm them both, it would be her part to comfort him,—to be a support to him. She made a repelling gesture with her hand, as if to drive away a disagreeable image, and another figure appeared suddenly before her mind,—a man, young, strong, decided, no dreamer, a man of rapid action. “The woman who has the right to lean on Alexander Edington’s arm can go through life tranquil and secure.” She sighed, but she was not sorrowful. One moment a sensation of remorse at her fickleness came over her. Was it not wicked and false in her to be ready now to give her heart to him whom she had first learned to like as Midford’s friend? But it was her reason alone that propounded this query; her heart did not concern itself about it. She had been mistaken when she assumed that she loved Midford. Was she obliged to voluntarily do penance for this mistake, to sacrifice her happiness to him? Her happiness was paramount to everything else. What was Midford’s fate to her? She felt herself at liberty to love another; she did not yet know whether she would love another, and the moment had not yet arrived to sound this thought; but one thing she could and would make quite clear to herself: Midford, the Dreamer, she loved no longer!

She went around engrossed in her own thoughts the whole day long. In the evening she accompanied her mother to a party, where she met numerous acquaintances, among them a wealthy young Frenchman, who had sued for her favor the preceding winter, and, since then, having seen that his courtship would be unsuccessful, had somewhat avoided her society. Something peculiar in her appearance this evening seemed to attract him again. He

approached the young American lady and said something flattering to her in regard to her loveliness: "You look absolutely transfigured this evening."

He waited then with some timidity to see what impression his "transfiguration" would make upon Edith, for well brought up young gentlemen rarely venture to flatter young ladies as strongly as most of them are able to bear. But the "beauty" smiled pleasantly, and looked so encouragingly at him that the old hopes suddenly came to life again in the breast of the enamoured young man. He went on with great fervor, and, as Edith did not reply, he became involved in long, beautiful sentences, not easily followed, until, to his intense mortification, he noticed that Edith, although smiling, and more "transfigured" than ever, was not listening to him at all. He withdrew, therefore, in a very bad humor; but Edith sent such a cordial glance after him, that he asked himself whether the young girl's mind could be altogether sound.

Mrs. Comyn and her daughter retired early. Edith's maid, a loquacious Frenchwoman, assisted her mistress to disrobe. When she had loosened the long, soft hair, and it had fallen like a golden net over the fair young shoulders, the maid fell back a step and exclaimed:

"Nobody but me has any idea how lovely *mademoiselle* really is!"

Edith blushed to her very forehead.

A few days passed away. No letter from Midford. And one afternoon, sooner than Edith had ventured to hope, Alexander Edington's card was unexpectedly brought in to her. Mrs. Comyn had gone out; Edith was alone in the drawing-room. She remained seated as if rooted to her chair. The book she had been reading escaped from her hands, and in joyful astonishment, but at the same time with some anxiety, she gazed speechlessly at her

friend as he entered the room. Alexander approached her with a rapid step. The twelve days of ocean travel had bronzed his features, and his clear eyes shone upon her bright and resolute. As soon, however, as he remarked Edith's embarrassment, he also appeared confused, and extended his hand to her with some hesitation. She laid her hand in his, but he hardly ventured to press it, and relinquished it at once. Then he took a seat. After a brief pause Edith broke the silence. She inquired after the particulars of his trip from New York to Paris. Edington replied to this with unwonted fluency of speech. He told about the weather they had had during the passage, the society and attendance on shipboard,—all sorts of things, that did not concern him in the least, and which he knew were matters of perfect indifference to Edith also. Midford he did not mention. When he had finally brought his detailed account of the journey to a close, he stopped, and then, after an embarrassed pause, inquired in an entirely different tone, slowly and diffidently, whether Edith had received his letter from New York.

She nodded affirmatively.

“And has Midford written to you?”

“No.”

“That is exceedingly strange.”

Edith repeated these words. “Perhaps he did not receive my letter,” she added, musingly.

This time Edington repeated Edith's last words. The two young people who had always had so much to say to each other in Trouville now appeared suddenly to have become extraordinarily taciturn.

“I *hope* that he did not receive it,” said Edith at last. She uttered these few words firmly and rapidly. Edington rejoined in a low voice:

“Why do you *hope* that, Miss Comyn?”

The young girl blushed suddenly: "Because I am ashamed of having written the letter," she exclaimed passionately, "and because I am provoked with you, Mr. Edington, for having induced me to write it. You allowed yourself to be influenced by your friendship for Mr. Midford in your estimate of him. You have since written to me yourself that he resigned himself calmly to his fate, and that he did not at all expect to receive any letters from Paris. And isn't it very humiliating, under these circumstances, for me to have—to have——"

She was unable to continue, and turned away from Edington with an impatient movement. The latter was observing her from one side, and saw her raise her right hand and cover her eyes with the handkerchief she held in it. An intense emotion overpowered him. He arose quietly and stood before Edith. He drew her hand away from her face, and as she cast a fleeting glance of reproach upon him, from eyes brimming with tears, he said pleadingly:

"Miss Comyn do not be angry with me!" But now her tears burst forth and she began really to weep. He still held her hand firmly. She had drooped her head and was sobbing softly. She was one of those rare persons who are not disfigured by tears. She looked inexpressibly pathetic in her grief. He felt drawn to her with irresistible power. His mouth approached her lovely head and suddenly his lips rested upon her warm forehead. She drew back affrighted. Then with an uncontrollable impulse he kissed her lips. Instantaneously the blood rushed to her cheeks; but she did not repulse him, and her arms softly rested upon his shoulders.

"My darling Edith," he whispered. At this moment the heavy front door below was closed so violently that the crystal pendants in the chandelier resounded.

"My mother," murmured Edith.

He stepped back and looked expectantly toward the door, but it did not open. He listened a half-minute longer, and, as the silence continued, he said in a low tone: "I will return this evening. *Au revoir*, Edith . . . my beloved Edith!" He would have embraced her again, but she turned her glowing face away from him and extended her hand. He kissed it reverently and left at once. She stepped to the window and watched him leave the house and hasten away down the Champs Elysées. She gazed after him with joyful pride. She remembered having observed Midford as he stole away from the house after his final interview with her. Alexander Edington walked with a light, elastic step. Yes, that was the way a man should walk who had won a great prize! Thank Heaven that she was free from Midford! Alexander had not tormented her with philosophical discourses. He had kissed her and made her his own. That was love! She still felt his kiss; it seemed to burn her lips, and she moved them as if to return it.

She stood for a long time at the window. The lamps were being lighted along the avenue. A servant entered the apartment with a lighted lamp. Only then did she awake from her delicious reverie. She sighed gently and went to her room to change her dress for dinner. So now her life was decided; she had made her choice! How beautiful everything was!

The thoughts which crossed one another in Alexander Edington's mind as he hastened away were not of so purely blissful a nature. An indescribable rapture, never before experienced, warmed his heart; but he heard an accusing voice, speaking as if from a great distance, indistinct, scarcely perceptible, and yet torturing. It became louder, more distinct, and suddenly said to him, quite audibly: "You have betrayed your friend." "Nonsense!" he

answered aloud. But the reproaching voice would not be silent: "Alexander Edington, you have betrayed your best friend. He would have treated you differently, more loyally than you have treated him."

* * *

With tears of delight and a throbbing heart, Mrs. Comyn had given her consent to her daughter's engagement to Mr. Edington. The long desired and expected event had occurred exactly at the right time. In a few months the extravagant lady, spoiled by her luxurious habits, would have been obliged to give up her establishment in France, for lack of means, and return to America to live with her relations. She did not see quite clearly how she could avert this unpleasantness even now, for she herself would not become any richer than she had been by her daughter's marriage, but she continued to hope that she could still remain in her beautiful Paris. She had candidly told Mr. Edington that she could only give her daughter an exceedingly modest outfit, and Alexander had received this communication with perfect indifference. "Let us not speak of that at all," he had said.

Americans prize money very highly, but there are many among them who prefer to earn their own fortune, rather than allow it to be presented to them by their wives. They are willing to pay a high price for display, and a beautiful wife, of whom they can be proud, seems to them an extremely desirable, though correspondingly expensive, article of luxury.

The engaged couple appeared happy. Alexander dined every day with his prospective mother-in-law, and spent every evening in the society of his betrothed. Mrs. Comyn troubled the young people very little, and they were able to tell each other reciprocally all that their hearts con-

tained. They always liked to be alone, for they had many things to tell; but they were not quite satisfied with each other, and several times Alexander left his *fiancee* in a gloomy frame of mind, while the latter retired to her room in an ill-humor. The cause of this periodically-recurring discord between the two was Thomas Midford. Edington had not been able to refrain from speaking of him and hinting that he reproached himself for not having treated his friend any too well. Edith had been very much displeased at this, and, after that day, it was she who turned the conversation again and again upon the absent one.

"You look out of humor again today," she would observe to Edington.

"I am not, my dear child. I have had a great deal to do and I feel somewhat depressed. That is all."

"I am sure you have been thinking again of your friend."

"Indeed you are mistaken."

"You think more of him than you do of me."

"That I do not, dear Edith!"

"It would be very wrong of you. I want to be everything to you; Midford ought to be nothing."

"He was my friend. I should like to be able to call him that still."

"There, you see! I am right: you regret what you have done."

And then would come tears and reproaches. Alexander would sigh in reply. He always consoled himself and comforted Edith, in conclusion, with the thought that his relations to Midford would be completely cleared up within a few weeks. He had written to the latter at Blighton Bar and announced his engagement.

"When I have once talked it over with him, then the matter will be done with," he said. "I know myself: I

am only provoked about a loss until I have paid it up. I regard Midford now as an unpaid creditor. When I have settled up my account with him, the thought of him will no longer disturb me. Patience, then! The main thing is, that we love each other."

The young people then became reconciled to each other, as a rule, without having actually quarreled; but a certain dissatisfaction remained with both of them afterwards. Edith began to conceive an openly expressed aversion to Midford, the disturbing element in her happiness. Edington, it is true, felt his vanity flattered by being loved so jealously by the girl of his choice; and yet, on the other hand, Edith's conduct seemed to him petty, unjust, and woman-like.

When, as he was turning the pages of "Hamlet," one day, he came to the passage, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" he laid the book meditatively aside, stroked his beard and said: "Yes, that is true!" But he loved Edith, and the idea of giving her up never occurred to him for one moment. He only said: "It is a pity that Midford should have taken a fancy to Edith. Besides, the two would not suit each other at all. They would have been unhappy if they had married."

He could prove logically to himself that he had done Midford a service in a certain way, by taking his place with Edith; but still, in his heart that inconvenient voice of reproach would not be silenced,—"Alexander Edington, you have betrayed your best friend!"

Such thoughts never entered Edith's mind. Thomas Midford was nothing more to her. She would have shed no tears to his memory if the news of his death had been brought her. He was dead to her. It vexed her to think that to Alexander he still lived, and that his shadow often intruded itself between him and her.

One day Edington appeared at an earlier hour than usual at the home of his betrothed. As soon as he had greeted her he handed her a letter. It was the one which Midford had written with so much solicitude, and to which he had requested a reply sent to New York. The letter, addressed to Edington, had arrived in Paris soon after his departure, had been sent after him to New York, where it had also missed him, and had now returned to its original destination, Paris, after weeks of wandering upon the ocean.

Edith opened the letter without any emotion, and read it through calmly from beginning to end. Then she handed the letter to Edington, with a smile that seemed hateful to him. He glanced through the written pages in a few minutes, and then gave it back to Edith, saying as he did so, "Poor fellow!"

"A poor fellow, indeed!" Edith repeated; but the word "poor" sounded scornful and contemptuous in her mouth, while Alexander had uttered it with evident compassion.

"The letter is old," Edington continued. "It would be of no use to send an answer to it now to New York."

"I should not have answered it under any circumstances," Edith replied in a sharp, irritated tone. "A delightful proposal of marriage, to be sure, which contains the assurance that the prudent wooer entertains the hope that he will not make his prospective wife happy! Is that a man? I do not comprehend how you can still defend him, after this doleful letter. You ought now to be enlightened in regard to your friend's character."

She departed in a bad humor and left Edington alone. Later, in the course of the evening, however, she turned the conversation anew upon the letter.

"If Mr. Midford has not changed his mind on the way," she remarked, "or if he is not waiting in New York

for a letter from me, with the patience and resignation so peculiarly his own, then we may probably expect to see your friend here soon. I, of course, shall not receive him. What shall you do?"

"I cannot close my doors against him."

"I do not ask that. What shall you say to him?"

"I really do not know, dear Edith; I must leave that to the inspiration of the moment I wish that the scene of our meeting were over. The very thought of it makes me hot and cold all over."

"What a brave set you men are! I am not afraid of all the Midfords on earth, but you, confess now, you are trembling at the thought of Thomas Midford."

"I do not tremble for any man alive! I wish Thomas Midford were my enemy: then I could easily have it over with him. Unfortunately he is my friend."

"You lose little when you lose him."

"I have always been fond of him. He never showed anything but friendship to me."

"Only confess frankly, that you regret having supplanted him."

Edington drew a deep breath and looked up to the ceiling resignedly. Then, controlling his indignation, he said gently: "No, Edith, I have never regretted what I have done. For no price, not even for the sake of Midford's friendship, would I wish to recall what has happened. You know it! Why are you so cruel and unjust?"

"Because I love you above everything else! Oh, Alexander, do not be angry with me; forgive me!"

The young couple embraced each other and peace was again concluded; but it was an unsatisfactory peace, that made neither of them really happy.

A few days after this, Midford entered Edington's

office at an early hour one morning. He greeted his friend as if he had left him the day before. He was not altered in the least: his movements were measured, his glance full of care. For the last twelve days, that is, ever since he had left New York, he had been constantly inquiring of himself the reason why Edith could have left his letter unanswered; and none of the numerous replies which he had thought out for himself had been a satisfactory one. He had arrived in Paris the preceding evening and his first step was to call on Edington, of whom he wished to inquire whether the Comyns were in Paris, and whether by chance Edington might not have a letter for him from Edith.

Edington was painfully embarrassed. He hardly ventured to look at his friend. But his confusion only lasted a few seconds. He quickly plucked up courage and said:

“Thomas Midford, I regret very much that I must be the one to wound you I have become engaged to Edith Comyn.”

Edington was prepared for a violent scene with Midford. He would have preferred it if the latter had heaped reproaches upon him and given him an opportunity to vindicate himself. But Midford stood as if stunned. He had grown pale and grasped the table, before which he was standing, with both hands.

“Understand me,” repeated Edington, aggressively,—for he was obliged to speak, to maintain his composure,—“I have become engaged to Miss Comyn.”

Midford looked at him with unseeing eyes, turned noiselessly away and approached the door. Edington followed him and laid his hand upon Midford's shoulder: “Midford, listen to me!” But the injured man made a rapid and anxious motion, as if he had been touched by something unclean, and wished to shake it off; and without vouchsafing Edington a word or a glance, he stepped

across the threshold. Only when he reached the street did he come to a clear realization of his misfortune.

"Is it possible!" he said to himself. He did not dream and ponder as usual; he lived entirely in the present. He felt himself cruelly treated, betrayed. Not for a second did the hope occur to him that the matter might yet turn out in his favor,—that he could win Edith back again. He felt that she was lost to him irrevocably; yet he wanted to see her once more. "For what purpose?"—He put this question to himself without replying to it. He wanted to hear from her own lips that she was faithless. In California he had taken great pains to put a false interpretation upon her letter; now he understood it as Warden had understood it, as a confession of love. She should acknowledge that she had lied.

He had approached the Comyn residence with a rapid step. It was still early,—eleven o'clock in the morning. At the moment that he was about to enter the house Edith came towards him. She receded a step at first, unpleasantly surprised; then she walked up to Midford and extended her hand, quite unembarrassed.

"Good morning, Mr. Midford; I am very glad to see you again, looking so well and cheerful." The man looked the very picture of suffering.

"Miss Comyn," he replied in a stifled voice, "I must speak with you; only a few words Will you allow me to conduct you back to your drawing-room?"

"I regret exceedingly, Mr. Midford, that just at this moment I have not the time. Can you not call on us after lunch? My mother will be delighted to see you. Or will you accompany me? I am going to the Rue de Montaigne."

She started on her way without awaiting Midford's reply, and he walked along by her side. She cast a side

glance upon him and noticed that he was wearing the same overcoat which she was familiar with last winter. The color of the garment was now faded and it looked somewhat shabby. Alexander Edington always dressed with the most exquisite care and was one of the most elegant young men in Paris. Midford seemed to himself inexpressibly pitiful beside this calm, cold, polite young lady; but after a little while his breast filled with bitter rancour, and in a trembling voice he exclaimed:

“I shall not return, and you will not see me again. You called me, and I hastened hither from the ends of the earth Now you receive me like a stranger. You are treating me badly, and I have not deserved this from you;—and Alexander Edington has treated me still worse; and I have always been his friend Shame on you both!”

Edith was holding her head down, for she was engaged in finding a dry path for her little feet. It had rained hard shortly before, and here and there large pools of water were standing upon the broad, uneven pavement. The blood mounted to her cheeks as she heard Midford's reproaches. She sought for an answer. When she turned her head around toward her companion he had disappeared. She walked on with the short, rapid, regular step peculiar to the ladies of Paris. Her dainty feet looked very pretty in her stout, well-made little boots. She was aware of this fact, and she thought of it as she raised her dress somewhat higher while crossing the avenue of the Champs Elysées. The thought of Midford did not trouble her; yet she was curious to see Edington, so as to learn how the interview between the two friends had passed off.

Midford stood still and looked after Edith's rapidly retreating figure. He noticed that the maid, who had discreetly remained a few steps behind while he had been conversing with her mistress, now rejoined her. It seemed to

him as if he remarked a mocking smile upon the woman's face as she hurried past him. He felt humiliated before the maid, before himself, before the whole world. He did not want ever again to see any one he knew. He stepped into a cab, which was standing near by, and gave orders to be driven to his hotel. There he remained the whole day in his room. The sky grew dark, gray clouds settled down upon Paris, and a heavy, pouring rain burst forth from them.

Midford opened the window; the cold rain beat upon his face and refreshed him. He drew several deep breaths; then, without closing the window, he threw himself upon his bed and sank into a heavy slumber. He awoke shivering, a few hours later. It was beginning to grow dark. He experienced a physical pain in his breast, that made it difficult for him to breathe. He was too much fatigued to reflect upon the matter, but he felt indescribably miserable. He mechanically packed up the few things that he had taken out of his trunk; then he rang, called for his bill, and by eight o'clock, twenty-four hours after his arrival in Paris, he was on his way to London. He was afraid that he was going to be sick, and for this very reason he wished to leave Paris. The thought that Edington might hunt him up, take pity on him, was unendurable to him. He was not angry with his false friend nor the faithless lady of his love; but he never wanted to see them again. The only human being for whom he longed was George Warden.

Edington appeared at the Comyns' at the usual hour. He looked depressed and spoke exceptionally little during the meal. Mrs. Comyn, who noticed this, thought that the lovers had been quarreling. She wished to give them an opportunity to become reconciled with each other, and soon after dinner retired to her room, with the pretext of

having a letter to write. A very lively scene then ensued between Edith and her betrothed: He upbraided her for her hardheartedness toward Midford, and she reproached him with his cowardliness, and even his lack of love. Several times she offered defiantly to give him back his promise. He felt intensely wounded at this, but Edith seemed to him morbidly excited. He subdued his anger, and acted as if he had not heard what she had said: "You are excited," he observed, "and I am, too. It is best that I should go. You have wounded me, and I should only offend you if I were to tell you how I feel at this moment. *Au revoir!* I will call for you here tomorrow punctually at two o'clock."

She was standing at the other end of the drawing-room and nodded to him silently.

When Edington reached the street he regretted having left without a farewell kiss. Edith's anger and passion were only evidences of her love for him! He would not leave her without making his peace with her. So he returned to the house. The front door inside the house, that led to the apartments, was standing open, as the servant, immediately after Mr. Edington had left, had occupied himself with closing the blinds in the upper hall and putting out the lights on the stairs.

Alexander opened the door of the drawing-room.

Edith was sitting at a small table, writing. She did not even raise her head, for she took it for granted that it was the servant entering the room. Not a trace of excitement was to be discovered any longer upon her countenance. Edington watched her for a few seconds and then called her by name. She sprang up.

"How you frightened me!"

"I could not leave you without making my peace

with you," he said. "Do not be angry with me, Edith. I love you above everything!"

"My kind Alexander!" She gave him her hand and rested her head confidingly upon his shoulder.

"You had the same thought as I," he continued tenderly. "You were writing to me."

Edith did not reply. He was standing close beside the table at which she had been seated, and involuntarily he looked down upon the unfinished letter which lay upon it: "Dear Madame Duvivier," the first line read.

He had supposed her in tears, grieved to death on his account, and he found her writing to her milliner. He felt mortified.

She knew exactly what was passing in his mind, and was out of temper about it; but what explanation could she give him? The fact was simply this: it had been arranged that Edington was to accompany herself and her mother the next day to Versailles. Edith wanted to please her *fiance* more than ordinarily, especially during Midford's stay in Paris, and soon after her lover had gone she had thought of writing to her milliner again, that the new hat which Edington had ordered for her at her request, and which she wanted to wear on this excursion to Versailles, must be ready by one o'clock. The servant was to carry this letter to Madame Duvivier the first thing in the morning; consequently Edith was obliged to write it at once. But all men do not understand that a woman, even when she is in sore trouble, has to think how she can look the prettiest possible in her distress. Edington made this discovery now for the first time, and was so amazed by it that he was not able to utter a word. He pressed Edith's hand again, kissed her on the brow and left; but on the way to his apartments he went along meditating and shak-

ing his head, as if he, too, had become nothing more nor less than a "Hans, the Dreamer."

The short passage of the mail steamer from Calais to Dover was an especially rough one that night. It rained and the wind blew; the sky was black. Most of the passengers sat huddled together in the steaming cabin below, or, with pale faces, were lying on uncomfortable sofas, while the steward, indifferent to weather and passengers, stood behind the "bar" and dealt out sherry, brandy and soda-water.

The stout little steamer ploughed its way indefatigably through the short, fierce waves of the Channel. It rose and sank; it was tossed from right to left; it climbed up one wave only to be seized by another and hurled on its side; but wheezing, groaning, hissing, it still fought its way forward unremittingly. In front of the steamer a great white expanse of light danced upon the raging sea, cast by the light on the mainmast far out into the night. Outside of this shifting illuminated space reigned impenetrable darkness. The deck was covered with water; a few small lanterns shed a dull, reddish light around. Besides the captain, the officers and sailors, who this night had a difficult service to perform, and who each and all stood mute and attentively watching at their posts, there was one solitary passenger on deck. He heeded neither wind nor weather. He was wet to the skin, but he minded it not, although he was shaking with a chill. He was standing with legs well apart, in that relaxed, yielding attitude that proclaims the experienced seafarer, his arms leaning upon the bulwarks of the deck, gazing out into the furious night. A broad wave that, splashing and roaring, cast itself against the side of the ship, and rising above it, buried everything upon the deck for a moment beneath it, tore him away from his place and dashed him upon the

floor. He slowly gathered himself up again. A sailor stepped up to him :

“Come, sir,” he exclaimed gruffly, “give me your arm. This is no place for you !”

“Thank you, I prefer to stay here,” the passenger replied gently.

Thereupon the sailor went to the helmsman and said to him : “Keep an eye on that man yonder ; it looks to me as if he were not quite right in his head.”

The passenger had again assumed his former position at the bulwarks and was bending far out over them. Then a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and the same sailor who had already addressed him said :

“I cannot have you here, sir. A wave might wash you overboard.”

“That would be a great piece of luck,” rejoined the passenger, in a mournful voice. His heart had become full to suffocation ; he was obliged to open it to some one.

“Sir ! Sir !” the sailor said, in a kindly, reassuring and warning tone. “Come with me.” And he led the other, who followed him involuntarily, into a forlorn little cabin near the wheel-house. “Rest here. In twenty minutes we shall be in Dover.” He looked at his melancholy guest, shaking his head. “What’s the use of losing courage, sir ?” he continued, in a cheerful and brisk tone. “Grit is what does it,—like our boat : right through the storm, always ahead !”

And at these words of sympathetic encouragement, the poor sick Midford began to weep, softly but bitterly.

*

*

*

LONDON, Nov. 26th, 186....

GEORGE WARDEN, ESQ.,
BLIGHTON BAR,

CALIFORNIA, U. S. A. :

We confirm our communication forwarded the 13th inst., of which we enclose a letter-press copy, and have the honor to inform you today that Mr. Thomas Midford, of Blighton Bar, has been lying very ill in Dover since the 23d inst. His connection with our house was discovered by finding a cheque-book which he carried upon him. As you instructed us in your last favor to hold £500 sterling subject to Mr. Midford's order, on which he has not as yet drawn, we considered that we were acting according to your intentions when we opened a credit of £50 sterling for the landlord of the hotel where Mr. Midford is staying at present, who has been represented to us as a respectable person, commissioning him to do and to have done, at our expense, whatever may be necessary for the good care of your friend. We beg you to take note of these arrangements, and subscribe ourselves,

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES BURGIS & Co.

When Warden had read this letter, which had been forwarded by the "Overland Pony Express," he betook himself straightway to the telegraph office, and indited a long and clearly comprehensible dispatch to his London bankers, without any regard to the number of words. In it he requested these gentlemen to send a messenger to Dover to make inquiries concerning Midford's health, and to inform the latter that he, Warden, would start at once for Europe, in case that Midford would like to wait for him there. Four days afterward Warden received a dispatch from Ventnor, Isle of Wight, signed by Midford, from which it appeared that the latter had almost recovered, that he intended to remain in Europe till March, and would be delighted to make the return journey to California in Warden's society.

Mr. George Warden required very little time to pack his trunk and set his business affairs in order. That same day he had a long interview with Midford's representative, Mr. James Cope, and the following morning he took the place of honor on the "San Francisco Mail," by the side of the apoplectic driver with the bright red gloves. Amid the hurrahs of the "boys," who shouted, "A prosperous journey and a happy return!" after him, he took his departure from Blighton Bar.

It was in the latter part of the month of February. In London, and also in Paris, the weather was still raw, almost wintry; but on the southern slope of the Isle of Wight the approach of spring was already making itself felt. In many of the houses in Ventnor the windows were standing open, and strollers were seen on the beach, warming themselves in the bright sunshine and enjoying the view of the deep blue sea.

An open carriage drove along the "Seaside Terrace" and stopped in front of a pleasant little villa. The proprietress, who was sitting at the window, behind the neatly polished panes, observed a stately, distinguished-looking gentleman who, although the carriage had driven up at a high rate of speed, as if its passenger were in great haste, now alighted from it very calmly, casting a tranquil glance at the windows of the cottage and approached the entrance to the villa. The landlady thereupon left the room and, smoothing her neat apron, advanced to meet the traveler at the front door.

"Does Mr. Midford live here?" the stranger inquired.

"Mr. Midford lives here."

"Is he at home?"

"He is down on the beach." She shaded her eyes with her left hand, looked keenly all around, and then pointed with her right to a certain stroller. "There he is,

down yonder Do you recognize him? There alone."

"Is there an unoccupied room in your house?"

"At your service. A nice room, with an outlook upon the sea; next to Mr. Midford's apartment. Would you like to inspect it?"

"That is not necessary. Have my trunk carried up there."

"Shall I send for Mr. Midford? My daughter can run to him in a minute."

"Thank you, no; I will go and look for him myself." He paid the driver, who touched his hat gratefully, and then he proceeded towards Midford. The latter, with his hands behind him, was slowly strolling up and down the beach. When he saw the tall gentleman approaching him he stood still. Suddenly he recognized him, and advanced quickly to meet him.

"How are you, Midford?"

"How are you, Warden?"

The two shook hands cordially, and then each drew back a step to contemplate the other.

"You still look somewhat hollow-eyed," said Warden; "but we'll soon have that all right again."

"You are changed more than I am," Midford replied pleasantly. "I knew you only in a red flannel shirt and top boots and now!" With visible satisfaction he surveyed his tall friend, who, in a well-made, simple traveling suit, had the look and the bearing of the born gentleman.

"If I am dressed again like a civilized human being," Warden rejoined, "it is all your doing. I have come here on the strength of your telegram."

"I thank you," Midford replied, with evident emotion.

The friends had much to tell each other, and they

were together the whole day long and until late in the evening, on the beach and in Midford's pleasant room. But the roles were changed: Midford had no examination to undergo. Warden was the more communicative of the two. His friend's story did not appear to interest him; he only inquired after the state of his health. He did not even mention Midford's trip to Paris, and the name "Jemima," with which he had formerly been so ready, did not once cross his lips. He announced that he had made a strike at Blighton Bar, and might now consider himself a well-to-do, if not, indeed, a rich man.

At the same time he had only good news to tell of Midford's business. The "house" in Blighton Bar, under Cope's careful guidance, had rapidly increased in importance, and the income which it produced had become so considerable that Midford, according to Warden's opinion, might hope to be free from debt in a year and a half or two years.

"And what shall I do then?" Midford asked. The two friends were sitting in Midford's room at a little table upon which the landlady had served their tea in a most appetizing manner. Outside, the night was clear and beautiful. The full moon shone bright in the cloudless sky, and was reflected in the trembling sea beneath, flecked with silver and black, whose long waves rolled in upon the sandy beach and then retired, with a gentle murmur and a muffled, monotonous roar. A picture of tranquillity and peace, outside and in the homelike room!

"And what shall I do then?" repeated Midford.

"And now the man is worrying about what he will have to worry about when he has no more worries!" Warden exclaimed, clasping his hands in a discouraged way, but smiling pleasantly the while, as one smiles at a child that one wishes to console.

“Do you still remember the words of my old friend, to whom you sent your compliments?” Midford continued earnestly, “‘A life full of care is better than an empty life.’ What am I to do when I have nothing more to worry about?”

“Speculate—lose—get into debt again; at least don’t let that trouble you, how you can make new cares for yourself!”

Midford had grown meditative again. Warden looked at him scrutinizingly.

“Young man,” he inquired, in a low tone, “Would it by chance afford you any pleasure to tell me how things went with you in Paris?”

“They went very badly.”

“Did Jemima finally prefer a wealthier suitor to you?”

“Him whom I considered my best friend.”

“Then the story is really perfect in its way. But that is past now. . . . Would you rather not speak of it?”

Midford did not reply.

“Would you like to return to Paris to inquire after your lost friends?”

“I never wish to see them again.”

“Would it interest you to learn what has become of them?”

“What can you tell me about it?”

“More than you imagine.”

And Warden narrated to his friend, who listened attentively, how he had made the voyage from New York to Southampton in company with a newly married couple who were returning to Paris from their wedding trip to America. It is easy to make new acquaintances on board a steamer during a long voyage. Warden had frequently conversed with the young husband and his pretty bride, and the three became tolerably intimate.

“One morning,” continued Warden—“we had been six or seven days at sea, and my new acquaintances had already confided to me all sorts of things in regard to their surroundings and their life in Paris,—the young bride said to me: ‘You will surely not return to America without having spent some time in Paris. I hope that you will not forget us then, and will come and see us.’”

“‘With pleasure,’ I replied, ‘if I come to Paris; but that does not depend entirely upon myself; that is, I am not going to Europe for my own amusement, nor for business, but to look up a sick friend, whom I am going to take back with me to California, when he is well again.’”

“‘If your friend is a true American, he will certainly not refuse to accompany you to Paris,’ the lady remarked.

“‘I do not know,’ I said. ‘Something may have befallen him in Paris that has rendered the city unpleasant to him.’”

“‘I know a great many of our compatriots in Paris,’ she replied, ‘perhaps your friend is not unknown to me. Would there be any impropriety in my inquiring his name?’”

“‘Not the slightest, madame,’ I answered. ‘My friend’s name is Thomas Midford—at your service.’”

“She did not answer a syllable. She became neither red nor pale, nor embarrassed. She gazed far out over the ocean, as if she were seeking for something on the horizon; and after awhile she remarked: ‘It is chilly. I will get a warmer wrap.’”

“The sea was rolling high, and I gave her my arm to escort her to the cabin stairs.

“‘Do you know my friend?’ I inquired.

“‘Yes, slightly.’”

“‘I should be willing to wager that that is Jemima,’ I said to myself. I cannot explain to you whence that

thought came to me, but there it was. I wanted to find out for a certainty, so I joined the young husband, who was promenading to and fro upon the deck.

“‘Are you acquainted with my friend Thomas Midford,’ I asked him.

“He stared at me, turned red to his very forehead, and stammered: ‘Yes—very well—How is he?’

“Now I was sure of the matter. ‘He has been sick,’ I replied, ‘and he is now better again.’

“After that day there was an end to the friendship of the Edingtons for me. The couple avoided me and I saw that my society was unpleasant to the wife and embarrassed the husband. I had no reason for wishing to annoy them, so I sought the society of others; but on your account the two interested me, and I watched them. On shipboard it is not an easy matter for one to keep out of another’s way, and so I saw many things from which I drew my conclusions.”

Warden stopped and again cast a scrutinizing glance upon Midford. The latter’s eyes were cast down and his face had not changed.

“Shall I continue?”

“If you please.”

“Does not this story excite you?”

“No. What you say does not pain me—it only interests me.”

“I am glad of that. Well, then, Thomas Midford, I am quite decidedly of the opinion that you have not lost much in that woman. She is no better and no worse than a thousand others; but she would not have suited you. You can govern only by kindness, and Mrs. Edington is one of those who seem unable to bear kind treatment. Sandy Edington is a tall, handsome man, who holds his head high, and likes to begin his remarks with ‘I say’;

but I hardly believe that his hand is firm enough to lead the woman with whom he now has to go through life from her ways to his. It seems to me as if, even now, each of them were following a separate path, and that signs of submission were to be discovered in the husband rather than in the wife. The tall Sandy did not always look good-humored when the little Edith gave him this or that commission; and I could see very well that he would have preferred not to obey her. This could not escape the wife's eyes either; but then she would say, calmly and pleasantly, but not tenderly,—‘please’; and he always did what she commanded, finally.

“A man does not like to confess to himself that he has made a mistake, when he sees that all his regret will not help matters. He lives then as he best can, with the given and irremediable factors. I imagine that Edington is prepared to regulate his life according to this principle. He and his wife will, in time, make mutual concessions to one another; they will lose without much pain the illusions which they cherished when they fell in love and became engaged; and I take it for granted that the conjugal relations between them will gradually settle down into a very matter-of-fact, extremely respectable and, to a certain degree, perfectly satisfactory union. But I should like to swear, and I would even wager, that Alexander has not found the intense happiness he once dreamed of, at his Edith's side; and that the young wife has already asked herself several times since her marriage, ‘And is this all?’ That is not a calamity; neither the husband nor the wife is to be pitied; but for you, Hans, it would have been a calamity. Rejoice that you have escaped it!”

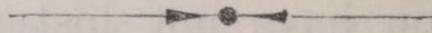
“Perhaps you are right!”

“Of course I am right. And as I have now got to philosophizing,—a pastime in which I indulge from time

to time, since I spoiled my own life in an extremely unphilosophical manner,—I will tell you another thing, which, if I had known it years ago, might have saved me perhaps many a vexation. The marriage with the beloved being, in novels and romances, forms the so-called ‘reconciling’ conclusion. In actual fact, this act is only the beginning of real life. It proves nothing for the happiness of the hero and heroine; on the contrary, it places everything in question, for it only demonstrates that he and she have taken a ticket in the lottery in which so many are gambling. Whether they will win a large or a small prize, or lose their entire investment,—that is a matter of luck. The ticket ‘Edith’,—I am firmly convinced,—would have been a bad one for you. You, perhaps, are still assuming that you had staked your entire life’s happiness on it, and have now lost it. You are mistaken; you have not yet played your game and you have not lost anything. In a few months, even, you will think differently about the matter from what you do today. In a few years,—and now I am allowing you an unreasonably long time,—you will have completely forgotten it. Everything is forgotten in this life. If it were not so, no one could live; for to live is to busy one’s self with the morrow. He who can only remember,—who lives with the past, with the dead,—is himself as good as dead. Only in time will you learn to understand this; but when you have once attained to the knowledge that what is past and gone is not of so very much consequence to you, as, sooner or later, it is sure to be forgotten,—then you will also live through each today with greater tranquillity. What you consider happiness will not exalt you to heaven, and unhappiness will not fell you to the ground. You will then say to yourself what I have been saying to myself every day for years, which has enabled me finally—after many desperate struggles, after

burying many a sweet hope,—to lead a contemplative, comfortable and not altogether unsatisfactory existence,—
 ‘Take it easy!’”

Midford, who had listened meditatively to his friend, sat still awhile longer, then he arose, went to the window, and gazed for a long time into the peaceful night, and, without turning around towards Warden, whose eyes had followed him with kindness and sympathy, he said in a low tone,—“I will try.”



✓ ALL IN VAIN.

[From the German of Rudolf Lindau.]

COPYRIGHT, 1885, BY L. SCHICK.

IT was in the month of September in the year 1866. I was in Yokohama at the time. The day had been hot and sultry. Just before sunset a violent thunderstorm had arisen and cooled the atmosphere. The storm had soon passed over, the sky had become bright again, and now the calm, lovely night was drawing nigh, cool and refreshing.

I was sitting on the veranda of a cottage which my friend, Henry L'hermet, had built on "the hill," in the vicinity of the European quarter, and in which he proposed to spend the hottest months of the year, in future. He had chosen a beautiful site. On the right lay an immense forest, in whose shades the terrible voice of the ocean, near by, died away harmoniously; to the left, in the valley, could be seen the bright, new houses of Yokohama; to the rear, far away in the distance, the long, gloomy Hakkoni mountain range. In solitary pride and grandeur the enormous mass of Fusi-yama, the "peerless mountain," the Olympus of Japan, arose on the extremest horizon. Finally, in front of us, extended the ocean, the beautiful, treacherous blue sea of the Empire of the Rising Sun. The tempest which had lashed it a few hours previously, and against whose oppression it had rebelled, raging and foaming, had now subsided; but the billows had not become calm again. Roaring and rumbling, as if com-

plaining of the violence to which it had been subjected, the ocean rolled in short, defiant waves, and dashed, hissing and angry, against the steep, rocky walls of the high shore.

But a profound peace reigned above the ocean. The night was clear and bright; the full moon was sailing through white clouds, and its shimmering silvery light lay like an immense fan of light upon the dusky sea.

My friend had been silent a long time, and only when I reminded him that it was late, and was about to retire, did he detain me. He had been lying on a long bamboo chair, until then; now he arose and stood beside me.

“For the last half hour I have been seeking for a suitable introduction to a story which you must listen to,” he said. I cannot find one, but still I should like to have a talk with you. You return to Europe tomorrow. I shall not see you soon again, and after you have left, I shall be alone for a long time. At my age a man does not easily make new friends. I do not often speak about myself. I should like to do so tonight for once. Will you listen to me?”

I sat down again, and L’hermet, after he had walked up and down the piazza a few times, as if he wished to collect his thoughts, seated himself near me. The moon shone bright upon his face, revealing it to me still and grave, as I had known it for years. His voice was calm and deep, and remained so to the end of the sad story to which I listened without interrupting him.

A Japanese servant, who had noiselessly approached to see if we needed his services, brought us without asking some fresh tea, on observing that I had lighted a fresh cigar. Then he crouched down in a dark corner of the veranda, where he soon after fell asleep. L’hermet, without taking any notice of him, commenced his story as follows:

“Many years have passed since I left Europe for the first time. I was at that time nineteen years old. I was without means. My imagination made foreign countries attractive to me, and a cousin older than myself, who had gone out to China before me and with whom I was in correspondence, advised me to come out to him. He promised to find me employment, and offered to advance my traveling expenses.

My father has died many years before; my mother was living with my married sister. We resided in a large commercial town, where people were accustomed to talk of foreign lands; long journeys did not seem unusual nor formidable. My mother did not oppose my departure, although she bade me adieu with a heavy heart. I received the news of her death a few weeks after my arrival in China, and in her I lost the only living being whose love had bound me to Europe. My sister, fifteen years older than myself, had married while I was still a child. She only cared for her own family and had become almost a stranger to me.

My cousin, who had established himself in Canton, received me with open arms, and procured me a good situation in a short time. The Chinese trade was at that time especially lucrative. The Chinese, as well as the foreigners engaged in it, made large amounts of money without any trouble. Money had, therefore, a correspondingly low value, and was spent by even the younger and less wealthy members of the foreign community with great facility.

I had led a very simple life in Europe, and expensive tastes of any kind were completely foreign to me. But I now was easily induced to follow the universal example, and, without loss of time, assumed the extravagant habits which were prevalent about me. This had no further

injurious consequences for me, as I made fully as much as I spent; only I found, after I had worked for five years, that my pecuniary position had remained about the same as on the day of my arrival. I made enough to live, but I did not lay aside anything out of my earnings. In the hope of being able to alter this state of affairs, I decided to follow the example of my cousin and establish myself on my own account. I was able, without much effort, to find the means and the credit to found a business of my own.

After the lapse of a few prosperous years I had laid aside nearly thirty thousand dollars, when the foreign quarter in Canton burned down. My house and warehouse were completely destroyed, and I was obliged to seek refuge in Hong Kong. The loss which I had suffered was considerable, but I easily consoled myself. I felt strong enough to regain what I had lost; and my friends who were wealthier than I, or had suffered less, were ready and willing to assist me in any and every way. But this time I did not wish to make use of them.

It had now been nearly ten years since I had left Europe, and I began to feel the debilitating influence of the climate in which I had been living during this long time. Besides, the last few months of my residence in Canton had been exceptionally exciting and fatiguing. The viceroy of the province, the terrible Jih, had been engaged in exterminating the rebels of the south during that time. He set about this task with pitiless energy. He signed the cruel death warrants without intermission, and hundreds of executions took place every day for several months. The place of execution was on a small island in the river, called Dutch Folly, in the immediate vicinity of my residence. I remember one dreadful day on which six hundred rebels were executed. Some twenty of these unfortunates had borne the title of chief, and were

slowly tortured to death with unheard-of cruelty. The shrill, heartrending cries of the tortured men reached my ears distinctly and drove me, bathed in the perspiration of anguish, away from my house.

It was impossible not to concern oneself with these horrible occurrences. They forced themselves upon the mind of every one of us, and formed the most frequent topic of our conversation. The human heart soon becomes hardened under the influence of long-continued violent excitement, and thus loses the delightful freshness which makes it so easily susceptible to the joys and sufferings of life. Owing to the influence of the enervating climate and the bloody occurrences in Canton, a complete revolution took place in my character in a brief space of time. My cheerful disposition vanished, my business did not interest me any longer; the people with whom I mingled daily, who had only the same things to tell me again and again, wearied me. I suffered from headache, from loss of sleep and appetite, and considered it advisable to consult a physician. He had nothing to prescribe for me. "You must go away from here," he said. "You must return to Europe for a few months. The voyage will cure you completely. You need nothing but diversion and a change of air."

My business had been much simplified by the fire which had robbed me of the largest part of my property. I converted what was left into cash, and with about ten thousand dollars in my pocket-book, I embarked for Marseilles. I had formed no definite plans; my intention was simply to divert myself as much as possible on the voyage and during my stay in Europe. However, I had not the slightest desire for so-called pleasures. They required fatiguing exertions, according to my opinion, and only afforded in return a slight enjoyment. I was still a young man; but independence, and intercourse with strangers,

had made me earnest, thoughtful and old before my time. I determined for the present to settle down in some small, and not too noisy, watering-place, and rest there, in the midst of beautiful scenery. If this benefited me, I proposed to visit the great capitals of Europe before my return to China.

On the voyage from Alexandria to Marseilles I amused myself with picturing my arrival. I fancied that the delight of seeing home once more would almost overpower me. Many pictures of a return home rose before my mind: old, half-forgotten songs about weary wanderers occurred to me once more. I could tell sentimental stories to myself as I had not done for fifteen years, and at that time, before my arrival, I could have described in poetical terms the delight of setting foot upon the beloved soil of one's fatherland.

All this vanished like the wind as I landed. Only for a brief instant did anything like emotion come over me. A large row-boat, laden with well-dressed people, men and women, passed us as we were approaching the wharf. The passengers appeared gay and lively, and waved us a friendly welcome. A pretty, slender girl was standing in the bow of the boat, disputing laughingly with a young fellow who could not bear to see her in that somewhat dangerous position. The loud, clear laughter of the girl penetrated my ear like long unheard music. My heart sank as it suddenly occurred to me that my youth was past and that I had not enjoyed it; and I longed for some one on whose shoulder I could lay my head. I felt myself alone and desolate. "Past is past, dead is dead," I said to myself involuntarily, and I could have sat down and wept.

We landed; we were surrounded by custom-house officers, baggage carriers, drivers and porters, who fought for our trunks and our persons, and offered us their

services in a loud, disagreeable clamor. I was obliged to look after my property myself, and came near having to distribute some blows with my cane to protect it against seizure by rapacious porters. It was an extremely prosaic return home. There was no more chance for tender, lovely, heartfelt sentiments of any kind, than for flowers to bud in snow.

I staid only a few hours in yelling, gesticulating Marseilles, which was in the highest degree unpleasant to me, and left the same day for my native town, where my sister, to whom I had announced my arrival, met me at the depot.

I had not seen her for ten years : she was very much altered and looked much older, but I recognized her on the spot. She resembled my mother, and my heart throbbed violently and my eyes became moist when she folded me in her arms and called me, in a trembling voice, her "dear and only brother." If she had wished at that time, we could have become good friends, for I felt myself strongly attracted to her. But her heart, which had opened for me a moment, soon closed again. She inquired with interest after my health and after my pecuniary condition ; she told me about her household cares. But our conversation soon afterwards became a discussion of general matters in China and Europe, and I separated from her again in a few days without any special pain. We had never had anything on either side for which to reproach or thank each other. For many years she had been pursuing her own path in life, which was quite separate from mine ; and so I continued on my way, alone.

A skillful physician, whom I had consulted by my sister's advice, confirmed what my doctor in Canton had told me. He mentioned several watering-places to me,

which would be beneficial to my state of health, and I decided, in accordance with his advice, to go to Tharen Springs. He told me that I would find there beautiful mountain scenery, pure air and pleasant, quiet, respectable society. This was all that I was seeking, and I left at once.

The journey to Tharen offered little agreeable diversion. I was frequently depressed and morose while it lasted. In China, when we talk about home we do this as a general thing in order to recall the delights of life in Europe. We forget that many things were lacking at home which we here possess; we overlook the fact that in Europe we were young, and that we have grown old in China. When, at last, the long wished for day arrives, when we are again upon our native soil, we are quite astonished that so few of the enjoyments which we expected are offered us. We find that home things have become strange to us, that we do not understand the people with whom we associate, and that we are not understood by them.

The petty cares of civilized life, which each one of us out here can easily shake off, seem pitiful, and embitter our intercourse with friends of whom we have thought with genuine affection during the long years of absence. Many of us who complained in China of being homesick, have been so radically cured of this disease in a short time, that they longed at home for their foreign land and returned to it. Everything that has value in this life must be purchased, and only fools imagine that anything really precious can be had for nothing. The good and the beautiful are expensive; every enjoyment, every delight, must be paid for in some way. The wise man is he who knows how to estimate that which he wishes to possess at its actual value, and is willing to give its full equivalent for it, but no more. Here, in China, we frequently make the

mistake of purchasing money too dearly by giving for it our youth, our health, sometimes our whole life. But an independence such as can be obtained here, is a precious blessing; and he who purchases it by hard work and difficult renunciations has hardly paid too high a price for it. On the other hand, the so-called enjoyments which civilized society offers its members seem frequently, to people who have grown old in uncivilized foreign countries, to be purchased too dearly, when all sorts of irksome duties have to be performed to obtain them. Freedom and solitude are synonymous. Society and social duties cannot be separated. Here in China we are free, because we care for nobody and nobody cares for us. In Europe we become slaves to customs and etiquette, or else we seem like insufferably whimsical people who are refused admittance into society, and rightly too.

I had not been a week in Europe, and yet I was already making new plans for my return to China. The condition of my health may in reality have been to blame for the fact that I became so needlessly indignant at many things which I saw and heard. What amazed me especially was the never-ceasing begging, not by professional beggars, to whom I gave with pleasure, but by hackmen, porters, waiters, whose insatiable avarice became positively disgusting to me. I had never seen anything of the kind in China, and out there I had forgotten certain characteristics of my native land. So what I now saw of my compatriots on my journey inspired me with little respect.

Then I also became frequently provoked at the conversations of my fellow-travelers; it seemed to me that in thirty-six hours I heard more silly speeches than had afflicted my ears during ten years abroad. The intellectual man is a rarity in China, and is only missed by a few; there is much stupidity and ignorance here, but in silly,

frivolous talk, no one can compare with the civilized Europeans.

A couple of hours before arriving at Tharen, I met a pleasant gentleman with whom I accidentally fell into conversation. He gave me to understand in the course of our talk together that he was a physician established in Tharen. The man pleased me; and as I was in search of rest and general care, I determined to put myself in his hands.

We soon became very good friends, and, through him, partly in obedience to his professional advice, I made several acquaintances who drew me gradually into a lively round of pleasures, of which I previously had had no idea.

My pecuniary circumstances at that time were not brilliant, as I have already remarked; but as I was fully determined to return to China, and confident that, with my large experience, I should not lack remunerative employment, even under unfavorable circumstances, I was able to use as I thought best the money that was then at my immediate disposal. This I did by making my arrangements for a comfortable life, conforming to all external requirements, without recklessness or extravagance, but also without scrimping. I felt myself the more entitled to do so, as I considered my stay in Europe as a vacation, well earned by my ten years of continuous labor. I can now see how I must have given the impression of a man of wealth, by the way in which I lived. I never spoke of my circumstances, because there is nothing in my character that would induce me to impute to strangers any interest in them. I made no loud display to attract attention, as everything ostentatious is repugnant to me; but I rented a pretty house, kept a nice horse and spent my money with the pleasure and the apparent indifference to its value with which the laborer, on a Sunday, lavishes his hardly

earned savings. That this gained for me in the little watering-place, the nickname of "the Nabob," only came to my ears later.

* *

Among my new acquaintances I soon took a special interest in the von Norman family, which consisted of the mother and two daughters. The eldest daughter, Joanna, might have been twenty years of age, and seemed to me exceptionally beautiful. Mrs. von Norman was the widow of a high government official who had left her a large fortune, and she moved in the best society. She received me with great affability, invited me to call upon her, and allowed me, after a brief probation, to consider myself a friend of the family.

The customs of the quiet little watering-place allowed me to call frequently upon Mrs. von Norman. Besides this, I met her and her daughters on the promenade, at the springs and at open-air concerts. Joanna pleased me very much, and with no one did I so like to converse in regard to my residence in China, as with her. She appeared to take a lively interest in my travels and my life in foreign lands. She asked questions of me which I answered willingly and freely, and listened attentively while I talked. I felt myself a better and more important personage when I was conversing with her, than in the society of other people. She also occasionally made certain remarks that showed, in a manner very pleasing to me, that she entertained a high opinion of me, so that, through her, I became elevated in my own estimation. One day, as a popular book was being criticised in my presence, she turned to me and asked me what I thought of the book. I was obliged to confess with some embarrassment that I was not familiar with the book, that, taken altogether, I had only read very

little. "I left Europe young," I said, "and since then I have always been obliged to work hard, so that only very little time was left me for reading."

"Working is better than reading," she rejoined. "Work forms the character; reading, only the mind. We have, unfortunately, too many intellectual people and too few men of character."

Similar little speeches from the young girl's lips pleased me very much, although I imagine that I did not over-estimate their value. I was accustomed to meditate to myself, but I had only rarely had opportunity to converse upon general subjects, and it was frequently difficult for me to find the correct and concise expression for my thoughts, as soon as I had left the firm ground of simple facts. Miss von Norman, on the contrary, educated by an intelligent mother and accustomed to intercourse with well-informed and cultivated people, always expressed herself with great facility and elegance, and gave a form, even to every-day thoughts, that had for me the charm of novelty, and surprised me pleasantly. In this she differed completely from my friends in China, who usually had much to do and little to say, and in whose mouths a prettily turned sentence was something quite unusual.

We have in the east a number of peculiar expressions that have become household words, which we make use of daily, while they are unknown in Europe, and consequently seem original there. I had a few of these words in my small vocabulary, and I applied them, without any affectation, whenever the occasion offered. You know, as well as I, the expression "Life is too short," which is frequently heard here. We say: Life is too short to make tiresome calls, too short to smoke bad cigars, too short to do this or that which does not please us. Miss von Nor-

man had appropriated this expression, and would frequently apply it in a joking way when she met me.

“Is life too short,” she would ask me, “to allow you to go walking with me?” Ah, no! My life was not too short for that. I felt, even then, that I should always find time to do everything she might require of me, and that my life would not seem to me too short to present her with whatever she would accept of it.

One evening, as we were sitting alone upon the balcony, the mother and younger daughter being in the room beyond, I mentioned, in the course of the conversation, that I intended to return to China toward the end of the year.

“What!” she exclaimed, “you intend to leave Europe again?”

I looked at her in astonishment. She had arisen and was visibly excited.

“Have I never told you this before?” I asked. “I am here only on a vacation trip,” I added, “and next year I must go to work again.”

“You have never mentioned it before,” she said. “I supposed that you would now live among us. How long shall you remain in China?”

She asked this in a voice whose emotion she could not conceal, and she looked at me as I had never been looked at before. I experienced a peculiar sensation; I could hardly breathe; nor could I turn my gaze away from the beautiful brown eyes which rested upon me so sadly and reproachfully.

“Joanna,” I whispered at last. She arose quickly and went into the house.

During the next few days she carefully avoided being alone with me, but I often met her glances, that shyly entreated and sadly reproached me, and caused me to forget everything but her.

The season at the springs was approaching its close. One day Mrs. von Norman announced to me that she should return to Paris, her permanent place of residence, on a certain day.

“We shall see you there surely,” she said. “You have become a valued friend to us, and I have not the slightest intention of giving you back your entire liberty, after you have served us here so faithfully. You must promise to become a regular visitor at our house in Paris also.”

I managed with some effort to utter a few words of thanks. I wished to add something in regard to my own plans and my departure for China, but it suddenly seemed to me as if I would, in so doing, be revealing a secret, for which I ought to have prepared her before, and, embarrassed and confused, I remained silent. She looked at me attentively, somewhat startled, but still very kindly, as if she expected to hear something more from me; as I continued silent, she proceeded, naturally:

“Well, in any case, you are still our slave for four days more; and when you take us to the depot, we will then consult upon the length of the leave of absence to be allowed you.”

Joanna, who soon after entered the room, looked pale and harassed. If I had said to her there, in her mother's presence, “Come, and be my wife,” she would have answered: “Yes.”

Why did I not do this? I am not quite clear in my own mind about it. I remained silent, principally from love, from bashfulness, and also from a sense of honor. It had now become evident to me, that I, without wishing to do so, had given people a false idea of my pecuniary circumstances; I also knew that Joanna, in China, as my wife, would lead an entirely different life, far drearier, than

the one to which she had always been accustomed. I was afraid of possible, unjust, but nevertheless justifiable, reproaches. I regretted, as never before, that I was not a wealthy man and—I remained silent.

The last evening of our life together in Tharen arrived. As I entered the apartment in which I had spent the only happy weeks of my life, Joanna alone came forward to meet me.

Her mother and sister had gone out to make a few parting calls; she had remained at home to receive any chance visitors.

I noticed at once that the many elegant trifles with which the room had previously been adorned had disappeared. The table, which had always been strewn with books, magazines and photographs, now stood bare and empty. The tasteless, gay-colored cover which lay upon it affected me unpleasantly. The whole apartment, in which everything before had been so cosy, now looked cold and dreary. It all depressed me. Even Joanna, in a dark traveling-dress which I had never seen before, seemed grave, solemn, strange, to me.

“Come out on the balcony,” I said. “It looks entirely too melancholy here.” She stepped slowly forward, without uttering a word, and I followed her.

It was a still, balmy, summer's night. The street at our feet was deserted. The mournful cry of a night bird came to my ears from the distance. I heard the muffled sighing of the wind in the old trees in the park, and I heard distinctly the beating of my own heart. I felt that my life was being decided; a thousand confused thoughts passed through my brain. I forgot the future and the past, to live only in the present by the side of the girl whom I loved with the whole strength of my soul, who caused me to forget all else on earth.

We stood there long silent beside each other; then she partly turned toward me, and by the dim light that shone from the room I saw her pale face wet with tears.

I grasped her cold little hand. All at once I knew that she loved me, and I cared for nothing more. "Joanna," I exclaimed in a low tone, "why are you weeping?" She hid her face on my shoulder and wept still more violently: "Alas, what will become of me when I see you no more,—Henry, Henry, do not forsake me!"

My heart was full to bursting. I knew no longer what I said. I cannot describe what I felt. But Joanna finally grew calm; she held my right hand between both of hers, and clung to me confidingly. Her wondrously beautiful brown eyes shone with love, devotion, confidence and delight. Oh, the glance of a girl who loves! Who can describe it, and what man upon whom it has ever rested can ever forget it! "Speak," she said, "speak!"

I had again regained control of myself, and in a few words I explained my circumstances to her. I told her that my pecuniary affairs would not allow me to settle in Europe at once, and that, in order to be able to do this, I should be obliged to return to China for a few years more; that I should be imposing too great a sacrifice upon her, if I should ask her today to accompany me out there as my wife, but that now, with a glorious aim before my eyes, I should work with new energy and pleasure, and was convinced of a speedy and complete success.

She listened to me with a smile, apparently attentive. I believe, however, that she hardly understood me. She interrupted me several times: "How kind you are to tell me all this; I have not the slightest right to know it; I only wish to hear that you love me. I have been very wretched since that evening when you said to me that you were going to leave us. Now I am happy."

But my heart was light, for I now had told her the whole truth; and joyfully and proudly I pressed her to my heart. "I will write to your mother tomorrow," I said. "It would be impossible for me to speak calmly with her today."

"You know best in everything," she replied; "do as you wish."

I hastened home. My blood was burning in my veins. I was in a fever, as it were, and in this excited frame of mind I sat down and sketched out a long letter to Mrs. von Norman. Then I wrote it out carefully, so that it might be read and comprehended without difficulty. I was conscious of no dishonorable intentions, and I wished to say what I had to say, plainly and distinctly. I have read the rough draught of my letter again and again. It was the letter of an honest, loving man, and I cannot regret having written it.

The morning light was already stealing into my chamber when at last I laid down my pen. But sleep was not to be thought of. I walked up and down the room, going over in my mind what I had said to Joanna, and what she had replied. Then I changed my clothes and went to the depot, to bid farewell to my friends. I had to wait there quite a long while, for I had come much too early. The waiting-room filled slowly; at the right time Mrs. von Norman's servant appeared with the baggage, and soon afterwards, at the extreme end of the street, I recognized the slender figure of my dear one. My blood stopped circulating for a moment, and I felt that I became deathly pale. I had at that time a warm, loving heart. Anyone of a calmer temperament could hardly comprehend my weakness.

Mrs. von Norman greeted me with her customary affability, yet it seemed to me as if she were somewhat

constrained. I wanted to ask Joanna if she had spoken to her mother, but I could find no opportunity. A great many friends and acquaintances had assembled to say goodbye to the von Norman family, and Joanna was continually in demand. She seemed bright and cheerful, and laughed and talked louder than usual. Our eyes frequently met, and what I read in hers tranquillized me. When I pressed her hand in farewell, she said to me rapidly, in a low voice, "All is well." And yet my heart was filled with forebodings, I knew not why.

In the same way I could exchange only a few words with Mrs. von Norman. "We hope soon to hear from you and to see you soon again," she said. A few minutes later everything had become silent around me, and I was standing alone on the platform. I went slowly to the postoffice to mail the letter to Mrs. von Norman. When I saw it slide into the letter-box I murmured softly: "God send me a favorable answer!"

One day elapsed before the reply arrived, as I had requested, in Tharen. When I finally held it in my trembling hands my heart throbbed violently. I tore open the envelope and read the heading, "My Dear Friend," then the subscription, "Your Sincere Friend." In a few seconds I had grasped the contents of the four-page letter, without having actually read a single line. I knew that my petition was refused. I walked rapidly to and fro in my room several times. I made an attempt to light a cigar, as if I wanted to prove to myself that nothing unusual had occurred, that I was entirely calm. But I was not calm. The mirror before which I was standing with the lighted match, and into which I glanced involuntarily, showed me a face that stared at me like that of a stranger in a terrible state of excitement.

I sat down at last and read the letter through from

beginning to end. It was the letter of a kind, prudent mother. She did me more than justice; she wrote that my proposal honored her daughter, and that she, the mother, was proud of it, and grateful to me; "but," she continued, "the solemn, sacred responsibilities that rest upon me, forbid me to accept or even to encourage your suit. You are ten years older than Joanna, and she is at an age when a speedy marriage is desirable for her, as well as for her future husband. I have no intention of imposing any restraint of any kind upon my daughter. She shall only marry the man to whom she gives her entire heart, and to whom she will gladly entrust herself. But, in order to secure her this complete freedom which you also claim for her, I must beware of a premature engagement. You wish to remain a few months longer in Europe, and you assume that your residence in China will last three years. According to this, Joanna, as your betrothed, would have to wait for you almost four years, even under the most favorable circumstances. This is a long time, during which your sentiments, as well as my daughter's, might undergo an entire change. You consider this impossible, at present, and this perfect confidence does you honor; but, as a mother, as one older and calmer than you, I think otherwise, and I must protect my dearly loved child against any possibility of breaking or regretting a formal promise. I urgently entreat you, therefore, to relinquish your suit entirely for the present; I must indeed go still further, I must impose it on you, as a matter of honor, to refrain from revealing it to my daughter in any way. Only upon this condition, which you will accept as completely justifiable later, if not today, can I look forward with tranquillity and pleasure to a continuation of our relations, hitherto so pleasant and friendly."

The letter concluded: "My daughter is free, and

shall remain free till her marriage. If you return to Europe in four years, if my daughter's circumstances have not altered in the meanwhile, and if your sentiments for her then are the same, I will favor your suit with rejoicing and perfect confidence, and welcome you as a beloved son if your offer is accepted by my daughter. For the present, dear friend, I must bid you farewell with a sad heart. My best wishes for your welfare will accompany you.

“Your Sincere Friend,

“LOUISE VON NORMAN.

I remained two weeks longer in Tharen. Everything there seemed to me to have undergone a complete transformation. The season was over; the summer visitors were departing; the streets became empty; the flowers in the hotel garden were withered; and in the park, where I used to meet a merry, noisy crowd, it was deserted and silent again. I walked down the broad, beautiful avenues where I had so often strolled with Joanna. Then the sun was shining and the birds were singing, and I now first realized how happy I had been. Now the autumn wind was scattering the dry leaves from the trees, the birds had migrated southwards, and a gray, low-hanging sky brooded over the dreary landscape without any promise of brighter days.

I felt sick and forlorn. In the evening I would betake myself to the street where Joanna had dwelt. There I would stand opposite the dark, lifeless house in which I once had found light and life. The windows were closed, and the balcony, on which I had stood by her side in the midst of flowers, was bare and empty. I would remain there for hours at a time, and I cannot describe my suffering. Only he can understand me who has seen the place again, desolate and cold, in which a longed for happiness, of which he is now bereft, once smiled upon him.

A fortnight later I went to Paris and rented a room there in a small house in the immediate vicinity of Mrs. von Norman's apartments. There I concealed myself like a criminal, and peering all day long from the window, I watched the house that hid my love from me.

I saw Joanna go in and out every day. She seemed to me unaltered in any way; she was neither sad nor gay. I felt as if a wrong were being done me in this, and fell into a regular state of melancholy. I followed her frequently without ever venturing to approach her, and in constant fear of being seen by her. These walks were a torment to me, and when I reached my room again, after one of them, I would scold myself for being such a fool at my time of life. But yet the next day I followed her again. In so doing I lost all my courage and all my self-respect.

One evening, as I was aimlessly wandering around the boulevards, I suddenly came across Stratton, an old friend from Canton. He took my arm, drew me into a restaurant, and plied me with a hundred questions in regard to mutual acquaintances in China, and told me about his business and pleasures. But he suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence, pushed his chair back a little, and bent forward to inspect me closely.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked. "Have you been sick? You look bad."

"I am somewhat ailing," I answered. "I find the life here different from what I expected...." I did not know what to say, and I stopped.

Stratton waited a moment. Then he said: "If you have anything on your heart that you do not wish to confide to me, then keep it to yourself, for God's sake. But do not forget, L'hermet, that we have been through thick and thin together and that I consider myself your friend.

If I can be of use to you in any possible way, command me. Old China comrades must stand by each other, and you can count upon me in every case."

I nodded gratefully to him, but could not speak. I felt very weak and I believe my eyes became moist. "Old fellow," continued Stratton familiarly, "come over with me to England. My brother has a pretty country seat there and has invited me over for the hunting. I promise you that you will be a welcome guest in his house. I can lend you a horse that will fly under your weight. Come! A brisk ride over hedges and ditches is a never-failing remedy for melancholy."

I did not feel disposed to continue the conversation. In order to bring it to a close I replied that I would arrange my affairs, and that he would hear from me in England in a few days. Thereupon we separated.

The encounter with Stratton did me good. I comprehended finally that it was high time to put an end to the wretched life which I was leading in Paris. I recovered my courage, and left for England. I found there much to do which claimed my attention, and from time to time diverted my thoughts from Joanna and my sorrow. Stratton, with whom I spent much of my time, proposed to me to enter his business, and undertake the management of his large establishment in Shanghai. I accepted, and thus assumed responsibilities whose fulfillment required a large part of my time. With work returned some measure of peace. My melancholy subsided, and hope again took up its abode with me. "I have no cause for despair at all," I said to myself; "Joanna has promised me her love, and fortunately her mother cannot alter this fact. In the sight of God she is my betrothed, and she will remain faithful to me." And I recalled her large, true eyes, and thought to myself they could never prove treacherous. I wrote to

Mrs. von Norman. I excused my long silence on the ground of the agitation produced by her last letter. I submitted to the conditions which she imposed upon a renewal of my intercourse with her family. Then I mentioned that I had decided to return to China before the term I had originally set had expired, and begged for the permission to visit her once more before my departure, which was near at hand.

The return mail brought me a most cordial reply. My relations to Joanna were not touched upon by a single word in it. Mrs. von Norman wrote me that she and the children—who sent me their kindest regards—would never forgive me if I should leave Europe without bidding them farewell.

After spending another month in London in feverish activity, during which time I exchanged several friendly letters with Mrs. von Norman, I was able at last one day to announce to her that I should arrive in Paris on the 23d of November, remain there a couple of days, and, on the 26th, leave for China by way of Marseilles and Suez.

I arrived in Paris at the appointed day and hour. Mrs. von Norman was waiting for me at the depot. She pressed my hand cordially and significantly.

“I thank you for coming,” she said. “I see in it a proof that you approve of my course of action.” This was the only reference to what had passed since our separation in Tharen. She then led the conversation so decidedly to other topics that it was evident to me that she was acting according to a preconceived, well-considered plan. As she was completely justified in regarding my coming as an unconditional acceptance of her decision, I was obliged to allow her to guide the conversation according to her judgment.

I stopped this time at one of the large hotels in the Rue

de la Paix, and in the evening betook myself to Mrs. von Norman's. Joanna became as pale as death when I entered the room, and did not stir from the chair in which she was sitting. When I bade her good evening she held my hand fast a moment and pressed it vehemently. Her voice, when she spoke to me, had a peculiar unfamiliar ring. Her eyes never left me; again and again I encountered their inquiring and, to a certain degree, demanding glance. She did not appear concerned about the presence of her mother and sister. It almost seemed to me as if she had made some agreement with her mother, by which the latter was to allow her to receive me, this last evening, according to her own wishes and sentiments. Her whole being revealed the fact that she was struggling with an intense inward excitement, and that her external composure was merely hanging by a thread which might break at any moment. Mrs. von Norman seemed to wish to avoid, at any price, the painful scene which would have been the consequence of this, and made a point of not opposing her daughter in any way. She dwelt upon the continuance of our friendly relations in her conversation with me. She wrote down my exact address in China; she made a note of the dates on which letters would have to be mailed in Paris in order not to miss the mail steamer at Marseilles. But as soon as Joanna began to speak her mother was silent, evidently resolved to allow her daughter full liberty in her presence and not to annoy her in any way. Joanna's younger sister sat there silent and embarrassed.

In the course of the evening Joanna managed to slip a note into my hand, unperceived by her mother. From this moment I had no more peace. After a few minutes had passed I arose to take leave. Mrs. von Norman and her youngest daughter had arisen simultaneously with me. Joanna remained seated, and her pale face became

still paler. I shook hands with Mrs. von Norman and Joanna's sister. Then I approached Joanna. She arose slowly, and, supporting herself by her left hand upon the table, she extended her right hand to me. "Farewell," she said slowly, "Farewell till we meet again—do not forget me." I was only able to bow silently.

As soon as I had left the room, by the light of the gas jet that lighted the steps, I read the letter which Joanna had given me. It contained only a few lines. She wrote me that she knew everything that had passed between her mother and myself; she entreated me not to be angry with her mother, and to keep my love for her, Joanna. "I shall be faithful to you," she concluded. "I love you alone, and can never love but you; and in three years or thirty years, as long as I live, as soon as you say, Come to me, I will follow you. May the thought of the one who loves you increase your energy and your courage; may it lighten the tasks which you are undertaking for my sake, and may it aid you to reach soon, ah, very soon, the goal to which you aspire, and on which depends the whole happiness of my life; and love me as I shall always love you." She had signed the letter with her full name, "Joanna von Norman."

I preserved the letter—I have it to this day in my possession. I have read it certainly a thousand times, and I still read it occasionally. I know every word, every letter in it. I have tried to interpret it in every way, but I have never been able to find anything in it but the candid expression of the perfect love and devotion of a noble character.

I left Paris the next morning. Up to the last moment I kept expecting some manifestation from Joanna. I told myself that this hope was unreasonable, but nevertheless I still hoped on. Even when I was seated in the train, I

still gazed anxiously around to see if I could discover her in the depot. I saw nothing more of her.

*

*

*

The voyage from Marseilles to Shanghai, the place of my destination, lasted forty-eight days, and interested me but little. I had already seen Malta and Egypt, Aden, Ceylon and Singapore, twice; and Arabs, Moors and Indians were all alike indifferent to me. Neither did I make any new acquaintances on board the steamers, and I arrived at length in China, bored and weary. From Hong Kong I wrote to Mrs. von Norman for the first time. My letter was a description of my voyage; I only ventured to refer to her daughter by sending her my regards at the close of the letter.

In Shanghai I found plenty to do; but work was now my only pleasure, my only recreation. I had only one aim before me,—to make money rapidly, so as to be able to return to Europe soon. When a man of determination, such as I was at that time, bends his will to one thing alone, when he has the courage to consider everything foreign to this purpose as of secondary importance, it is rarely the case that he does not accomplish this end. My efforts were crowned with rapid and abundant success. By each mail I was able to make a favorable report to Mrs. von Norman upon the progress of my business affairs; and with considerable regularity, although not so frequently as I wrote, I received friendly letters from her. She wished me success in my undertakings, in which she seemed to take an active interest; she gave me friendly, motherly advice: I must take care of my health, I must not overwork, I must act with prudence and not expose myself to the danger of losing at one stroke what I had amassed so toilsomely. Each one of her letters contained a few words

about her daughters. Each time it was the same sentence: "My daughters are well; they keep you in friendly remembrance and send you their best wishes." I always read these lines with especial attention, and endeavored to discover a concealed meaning in them: "My daughters are well; they keep you in friendly remembrance,"—that is to say, "Joanna has forgotten nothing, she will keep her promise; I can rely upon her implicitly." Love demands much and is content with little. From Joanna herself I heard nothing during this time. Many a time this thought troubled me; but then I endeavored to console myself by saying to my heart that her mother had probably compelled her to promise not to write to me. And with this I became tranquil. I was so secure of my own fidelity that it was difficult for me to believe in the disloyalty of my loved one.

My business, in the meanwhile, continued its course uninterruptedly. My neighbors spoke with respect, and not without some envy, of my successful efforts. In the course of two years I saw myself in possession of a by no means insignificant fortune. I began the third year with the best trade that had been known in China for years, and in a few months it more than doubled my capital. I was now a rich man; I was richer than I had ever hoped to become. I can hardly describe the sensation of inward satisfaction with which I looked over the balance-sheet, so neatly written out by the bookkeeper. I revelled in the large, handsome figures that asserted with mathematical exactness that I had now accomplished my purpose. Like a miser, I would have liked to behold my wealth lying in gold before me, and to fondle it. I had never wavered in my original determination to return to Europe at the earliest possible moment. Now I could allow myself to think of an immediate execution of my plan. It was now

only a question of winding up rapidly the few remaining enterprises, or, where this was not possible, of bringing them into such a shape that I could with a quiet mind leave them to another to be disposed of. I calculated that I should require three months for this. It was the month of March; in June or July, at the latest in August, I could leave China, and in October, exactly three years since my departure from Europe, I might count with certainty upon arriving there again. I seated myself to impart this intelligence at once to Mrs. von Norman. During the last six weeks I had been living as if in a fever, and, for the first time since my arrival in China, I had not written to Paris for a whole month. Upon reading the copy of my last letter, I noticed that it referred to a letter from Mrs. von Norman, four weeks old at the time of writing, as the latest news received from her. A month had passed away, since that time, so rapidly that I had forgotten this.

I now felt somewhat disturbed by this circumstance, for Mrs. von Norman had always written me once, and often twice, in each month, and now I had been eight weeks without news from her. I read over again the last letter which I had received from her. It did not contain anything to make me uneasy, nor to tranquillize me. It had been written in the latter part of December and had brought me good wishes for the coming year. "My children," it said as usual, "are well and wish to be cordially remembered to you." Then came a description of some parties, especially one, a large ball, at which a royal prince had especially distinguished Mrs. von Norman's second daughter, eighteen years of age. Nothing was said in regard to Joanna. Depressed, I laid the letter aside, and wrote only a few lines myself, in which I announced my proposed arrival in the coming autumn, and postponed

giving the exact date of my departure from Shanghai till a later communication.

Neither did the next mail bring me any news from Paris. Now I really was alarmed, and the fortnight which had to elapse before the arrival of the next mail steamer seemed horribly long to me. But I was only impatient. There was no reason for serious apprehension. The last letter from Mrs. von Norman was as friendly and cordial as all her letters had been for two years.

One morning, my Chinese servant came into my room very early, and announced that the mail steamer had been signaled as having just arrived in Woosung, and was expected in Shanghai in a couple of hours.

I sprang out of bed, dressed myself in the greatest haste, as if I had not a moment to lose, had my horse saddled, and rode along the Whampoa River toward the steamer. It was a glorious morning, and I felt fresh and strong. My brave little pony leaped gaily over hedges and ditches, and seemed to be, like myself, in a good and lively humor. "If we were going hunting today," I said as I patted his short, sturdy neck, "we would not be among the last ones." He seemed to understand me, and want to show himself worthy of my commendation, and, like an arrow, we sped along over the level ground. I have never had another such fine ride since that day.

At last I saw the steamer approaching, majestic and powerful, breasting the swift-flowing current. I surveyed it for an instant. From the mainmast floated the red flag with the golden anchor, the signal that the ship had the European mail on board. I turned around and rode back home.

The hour which had yet to pass before the letters could be distributed seemed as if it never would end. I wandered like a restless spirit from room to room. At

last the Chinese office-boy brought me the first batch of distributed letters. I slipped the envelopes quickly through my hands: the so-anxiously-expected letter was still wanting. I had seated myself at my desk, and now began to open and read the letters just brought in, in systematic order.

Stern, my bookkeeper, an old friend and fellow-worker, from whom I had no business secrets, came from the office and seated himself, according to his usual custom, at a small table behind my desk, in order to read there himself the letters just read and annotated by me, and to discuss with me at once, if necessary, the requisite steps to be taken.

The errand boy brought the second parcel of distributed letters. I recognized at once Mrs. von Norman's large, handsome handwriting upon one of the very first envelopes. Stern had come to my side, and started to make some remark in regard to a letter he had just read. I listened to him mechanically, but did not comprehend a word of what he was saying. "Excuse me a moment, dear Stern," I said, "I should like to read a few private letters." The bookkeeper quietly gathered up the letters lying before me, which I had already read, and seated himself again at his place behind my desk, whose high back concealed me from him.

As soon as I opened Mrs. von Norman's letter I felt that it contained bad news. My eyes flew over the lines; the clear, firm handwriting showed me what I was looking for at the first glance: Joanna—engagement—M. de Cissaye. I saw no more. Everything swam before my eyes. But I recovered myself immediately. A deep silence reigned in the small room in which I was sitting. I heard Stern folding letters and papers. I heard the regular movement of the pendulum in the tall clock against the

wall. I knew that I rested my forehead upon my hand, and looked attentively out of the window, where business men and errand boys were hurrying past with papers, letters and parcels in their hands. Beyond, the yellow waters of the swift-flowing Whampoa were rushing to the sea; hundreds of red sampan boats were passing in all directions upon the river. I heard the shrill cries with which the dock hands accompanied their laborious tasks. I heard the hissing of the recently-arrived steamer, as it let off its steam. The noise and the din reached my ears as if they came from a long distance. But I hearkened attentively as if it were necessary to discover some hidden meaning in the confused jumble of noises. Nothing was stirring in the room. Outside all was life and busy stir, inside everything was unnaturally still and dead. It seemed as if I were under the influence of a bad dream. I knew that some calamity had befallen me, that all my happiness was at an end, but still I could not clearly comprehend the nature of the wound that was causing me suffering. I only felt that I was wounded, grievously wounded.

I took up the letter again, folded it with great care and attempted to put it into the envelope in which it had come. My hands were trembling, and the thin envelope tore. I then put the letter in my pocket, and began anew to read and arrange my business papers: silk—tea—opium—rice—I saw the words, but of their relation to myself I knew nought. I comprehended nothing. The world had all at once become utterly changed. I no longer cared for anything.

I turned my chair around to the window, so that Stern, even if he should come to my desk, could not see my face; then I took the fatal letter again out of my pocket, and re-read it, first superficially, and then, concen-

trating my attention by a great effort, read it through from beginning to end. As if in a dream, I heard Stern come to my desk and pick out from among the papers the letters I had opened, and then silently reseal himself at his table.

Mrs. von Norman's letter was a long, carefully composed epistle. She began with excuses and explanations of her long silence; then she wrote a few lines in regard to her cares as the mother of two grown-up daughters; and after this introduction she came abruptly to the purpose of her letter, and announced to me, in a few words, that Joanna had been honored by an offer of marriage from one M. de Cissaye, Secretary of the Legation at the Russian Court, which she had accepted. "I did not attempt to influence my daughter's choice in any way," she continued, "but I wholly approve of it, and have cause to rejoice over it. It is true that this marriage destroys certain plans very dear to me, which I have long cherished in the depths of my heart; but I have never had anything but the happiness of my beloved child in view, and I must hope that I have acted for the best as regards her happiness. I am confident, dear friend, that my daughter has also your wishes for her future welfare."

I dropped the letter in my lap, and sat brooding in silence a long while.

Suddenly I felt some one touch me. I turned slowly around and looked up. Stern was standing beside me. "What is the matter!" he exclaimed, starting back, "You have received bad news!" I do not know how the words came to me: "All my happiness is lost forever," I said, and buried my face in my hands. Stern drew near again, and I felt the kindly pressure of his hands upon my shoulder. "You may read the other letters, please," I said, without turning around. "I should like to go to my room." "Certainly," he quickly replied. "Give yourself

no uneasiness about the business. I can look after everything." I heard him collect the letters on my desk and then approach the door. There he stopped. "Can I do anything else for you?" he inquired hesitatingly and gently. "Thank you, no," I replied. "Only I would like not to be disturbed again today."

All became silent, and after a few minutes I went up stairs to my bedroom, where I locked myself in. There I sat the whole day long, drinking the cup of sorrow to the dregs.

Nicholas Gogol wrote a sad little story: "The Cloak," which I have often read. It tells about a petty government official in Russia, who economizes for years to be able to purchase a new fur cloak. The poor fellow endures the greatest sacrifices in order to accomplish his purpose. At last he comes into possession of the precious garment. He appears in it on the streets of Moscow the following Sunday. When he is returning home at evening he is attacked by brigands, who rob him of the cloak so hardly won. He cannot bear his loss, he falls sick, takes to his bed, and dies. I kept thinking of this forlorn hero all the time. "They have taken my cloak away from me," I said, and it seemed to me as if there were nothing left for me to do but to lie down and die. Then I began to be ashamed of my grief, and to fear that it might be noticed by strangers. I wanted neither sympathy nor pity. The treasure I had lost had no more value in others' eyes than had the poor Russian's cloak in mine. I wrote a few lines to Stern and sent them to him by the servant: "Dear friend, do not mention the loss I have sustained to anyone. I will tell you later the reasons why I impose silence upon you."

Human nature, thank God! is too weak to be able to endure great griefs for very long. The wounded heart

breaks or it heals again. My recovery was slow, and I feel that the best that was in me is dead; but I became strong enough again to be able to endure life. For several weeks I crept around, sad and solitary. The faithful Stern took care of me like a sick brother; but, nevertheless, I did not wish to confide my sorrow even to him.

My friends and acquaintances might have discussed among themselves what it was that had changed me so suddenly. But out here people are not so inquisitive as in Europe; as a general thing they respect their neighbor's secret, as long as this secret has nothing to do with his commercial credit; and no one asked me any inconsiderate questions. "L'hermet has lost a friend, some near relative," they thought, and were easily satisfied with this explanation.

I relinquished for the present my plan of returning to Europe. I concluded to settle down for good in the east. I bought a place in Japan; I began to travel, visited India, Batavia, Manilla, and traveled over a large part of China. I saw nothing which could remind me of my loss; I saw and experienced many things that consoled me for it. My life is tranquil now.

One day I had left Shanghai in a boat to visit the great lakes of Taihoe. In the evening we anchored in the canal, in the vicinity of a large city. I arose the next morning at daybreak, in order to escape the curiosity of the natives while viewing the place. Near the entrance to the city I saw a building which attracted my attention. It was a kind of round, open temple, whose heavy, profusely decorated roof rested upon stout wooden pillars. The floor was covered with straw, and upon this straw I saw about twenty ragged people lying. Some of them were sleeping, while the rest had partially risen and were greedily devouring the contents of large wooden dishes

full of rice, which had been placed beside the resting-place of each one. A watchman, with a pipe in his mouth, was slowly making the rounds of the temple, glancing occasionally at the rising sun. I asked the Chinese servant, who accompanied me, what this spectacle meant. He made inquiry of the watchman and presently brought me the intelligence that the building had been erected by a wealthy and benevolent merchant, who offered its shelter for one night to all the beggars and vagrants who might be passing through the city, and presented them with a breakfast in the morning. "The guests must go on their way one hour after sunrise and leave the city, and they are only allowed to present themselves here once in the course of a month. They are to find rest here, to enable them to continue their journey the next day. The watchman will soon wake them up now, for the sun indicates the hour when they must all start." Then he directed my attention to a black wooden shield, hanging between two of the pillars, which bore a brief Chinese inscription. He translated it for me: "Rest for the weary wanderer."

The watchman, in the meanwhile, had been engaged in arousing the sleepers, by pushing them gently with his foot, without the slightest brutality, until they opened their weary eyes. They were wretched creatures, these poor wanderers, such as are to be found only in China: covered with rags, frightfully emaciated, poverty and suffering in every look and movement. Each one hastily grasped the brimming dish that stood beside him, swallowed its contents, and prepared to leave the hospitable shelter which had given him a brief, rare, and longed-for repose. One of the sleepers would not awake, however, and paid no attention to the watchman. The latter pushed him gently, then more violently; called to him, shook him—he still remained motionless. I looked into the cold, quiet, yellow,

wretched face. The man was dead. "Rest at last, weary wanderer." The watchman covered the body with an old straw mat and departed with lingering steps. All misery has an end, and even to the poorest there comes at last peace and rest. I, too, have found peace.

Long years have passed since the calamity befell me. During this time I have been in Europe twice. I have not sought for Joanna, nor have I seen her. I am not afraid to meet her. I hardly believe that any emotion would stir me. All the evil which she could inflict upon me was done years ago. Her image has become fainter and fainter; but yet I often think of her still. I do not imagine that she is unhappy, and I wish her peace and happiness. But when I see her, as she lay on my breast on the balcony at Tharen, and wept: "Henry, Henry, do not forsake me!" when I reflect that for her, and for her alone, I toiled and worried early and late, and that my faithful, manly love, for which she once had plead, was afterwards rejected so cruelly, I clench my fists and say, "Unhappy girl!"

Often I see her as in a dream. She is pale and beautiful as on the day when I bade her farewell. When she sees me she stops and a deadly fear seems to rivet her to the floor. Her wondrous eyes are open wide, and her gaze rests fixedly upon me. I pass her by with a low bow. But all at once I am obliged to stop. I hear a beloved voice which calls to me, "Henry, Henry!" I turn around. She is still standing on the same spot, she is still looking at me, and her eyes are full of an inexpressible sorrow. "Henry, Henry!" The name recalls to my memory the long past years of my joyless youth. I am now old and I am alone. No one calls me Henry any more; for years no one has called me thus: "Henry, Henry!" The remembrance of my lost happiness assails me with irresistible power. I cannot turn my eyes away

from her. There she stands before me, and it seems to me as if her gaze were imploring sympathy and forgiveness. I draw near to her, speak to her, and at this moment my dream comes to an end. My imagination stops short, I do not know what I should have said—whether I should have entreated, reproached or spoken in anger. The pale apparition grows paler and paler, it vanishes, and I awake. But it does not leave me entirely; this dream has become a part of my life. It repeats itself with a certain regularity; it even seems to me that it returns more and more frequently. And I know that the apparition will appear to me again when I am lying upon my death-bed. It will then rise before me, pale and beautiful, and the beloved voice will call for the last time: “Henry, Henry!” And when I awake from that sleep I shall at last find words to finish my dream: “Joanna, I loved you on earth with infinite sorrow. Give me now the happiness which you promised me.”

* *

My friend was silent and a painful pause ensued. The full moon was at the zenith, and all around the silent land was sleeping in its wondrous light. It had grown late. The Japanese servant, who had been asleep in the corner of the piazza, had awakened, and busied himself in clearing off the table at which we had supped. A lighted candle was standing upon this table. A moth, which had approached too close to it, had been caught in the flame, and struggled in vain against the consuming fire. In order to put the insect out of its misery L'hermet pushed it with a little stick into the heart of the flame. “Poor little creature,” said he; “if you had remained in your dark corner, you could have lived and died there in peace, without knowing pain. The brilliant flame fascinated you, and

you die in torment, because you came in contact with it for one brief moment."

We had both arisen. L'hermet pressed my hand and wished me good night.

The next morning I left Yokohama.

✓ FIRST LOVE.

[From the German of Rudolf Lindau.]

COPYRIGHT, 1885, BY L. SCHICK.

I have led a wandering life for years, and am most at home in railroad cars, waiting-rooms, hotels and restaurants. I read all sorts of things as I go along, and have given up trying to be particular in my reading. English, German and French novels and stories by authors whose names are unfamiliar to me, or whose style of writing is unpleasant to me, inspire me with an unconquerable respect. Books by these writers I do not venture to open, even at moments of the greatest dearth of reading matter. With this exception I seize everything that the newsboys are crying, and I glance through every weekly or monthly publication I come across in eating or reading room. Hence it happens that I have continually in my head the fragments of a considerable number of stories, and as I have no especial interest in their classification, it occurs sometimes that I connect the beginning of one with the end of another. Some of these checkered stories please me just as well as familiar novels by popular authors. This is a matter of taste, and I do not pass any criticism. Sometimes I even conclude certain stories whose beginning I have read, or invent for myself the first chapters to fit the conclusion of a novel that has fallen into my hands. After some time it becomes difficult for me to distinguish between what is mine and what is not mine. In most cases, however, when I leave a city

raise my eyes, but I would have been willing to go through fire and water a thousand times to draw the lovely girl's solicitous gaze again upon me. In the evening I ascribed in imagination the most marvelous deeds of heroism to myself, by which I would arouse her astonishment and compel her admiration. I did not long for nor expect anything else. The unconscious dawning of love in the heart of youth is, with all its peculiarities, nothing but sheer childishness. The young heart is foolishly fond of sacrifices, touchingly content with little, and obstinately egotistic and conceited. It is not yet capable of loving, but it hungers to be loved, to be admired. To make another happy is not its aim, and the only happiness it knows is a blissful unrest; its only craving: to receive love without giving love. In after years we give without receiving, with a fair measure of content. Thus everything is arranged for the best in this world, in which there are some people who are glad to give, and others who find their joy in receiving. But what a rare, brief, blessed time, the time when one gives and receives, when one loves and is loved! I have known it, but she who made me so inexpressibly happy then has forsaken me now. How beautiful the world was when I looked at it with her! How blue the sky, how soft the air! Hand in hand we hastened from place to place, and wherever we went, joy came smiling forth to meet us, and pleasure invited us to linger. We went laughing, singing, rejoicing on our way, secure in our happiness everywhere. We at times carried our gaiety too far, and our boisterous mirth startled graver people. But their severe glance grew mild when it rested upon us. "They are young, let them enjoy themselves," the old folks said, and went on their way with a mournful smile. She clung so closely to my arm, she nestled so lovingly to my side, I thought I never could lose her. The thought of a

possible change never entered my mind, never troubled me. Thus I lived for a long while. Weeks, months, years flew past, without my noticing it.

“One evening, after we had spent the day even more noisily and merrily than usual, she seemed all of a sudden to become cold and out of humor. A fearful anxiety, which I am unable to describe, overwhelmed me. An ice-cold perspiration broke out all over me. ‘She is going to leave me,’ I said to myself; ‘certainly, surely she is going to leave me!’ It occurred to me then how little I had really troubled myself about her; that I had, perhaps, demanded too much of her attachment and fidelity. For the first time I felt my confidence in myself and in her wavering, and I gazed anxiously and scrutinizingly into her eyes. But her glance wandered wearily away from me and gave me no reply. My peace was gone, my life was changed. She, indeed, occasionally pressed me impetuously to her breast still, but the sweetness of her kisses had vanished. She would often push me coldly away, and I saw, to my unutterable pain, that my love wearied her. And one night, when I came home late, fatigued and dejected, I found the room dark, cold and vacant,—she, my joy, my light, my all, had disappeared.

“Now ensued a wretched existence for me. The loss which I had sustained gnawed at my heart, but my care was to conceal this loss from the world. I endeavored to wear a pleasant, happy countenance. I sought the society of gay young people. I spent the greatest care upon my appearance and my attire, a thing heretofore unknown to me, and which I would once have ridiculed. My enemies even accuse me of having painted my cheeks for awhile, to conceal their pallor. This is not true, but I must acknowledge that I did buy a small bottle of a newly invented tincture which was to restore to my hair, now

growing gray, the color of youth. This hypocrisy and masquerading did not last very long. I soon grew weary of it all, and what the world says worries me no longer, nowadays. I know that my beloved has forsaken me, that nothing will bring her back, and anyone who knows me can be aware of it and recognize my loss by my appearance. But I am still constantly lamenting my lost one. I miss her everywhere; nothing, nothing can replace her in my heart, and I would gladly give everything that I possess, every pleasure and every happiness that may be yet in store for me, to be able to call her mine once more, to live over again that brief, beautiful time during which alone I was happy."

Gaston was silent. He gazed fixedly into the dying embers and rubbed his thin hands slowly together, as was his way.

"And what was the name of this wonderful creature?" asked the Countess.

"My youth," Gaston replied, without removing his eyes from the fire.

INDEX TO PAGES

OF THE

“COLLECTION SCHICK,”

on which may be found the first paragraphs of each page of the English Translation.

—O—

HANS, THE DREAMER.

<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>
PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.
5.....	5	36.....	30	65.....	55
6.....	5	37.....	31	66.....	56
7.....	6	38.....	32	67.....	57
10.....	9	39.....	32	68.....	57
11.....	9	40.....	33	69.....	58
12.....	10	41.....	34	70.....	59
13.....	11	42.....	35	71.....	60
14.....	12	43.....	36	72.....	61
15.....	12	44.....	37	73.....	62
16.....	13	45.....	38	74.....	62
17.....	14	46.....	38	75.....	63
18.....	15	47.....	39	76.....	64
19.....	16	48.....	40	77.....	65
20.....	17	49.....	41	78.....	66
21.....	18	50.....	42	79.....	67
22.....	18	51.....	42	80.....	67
23.....	19	52.....	43	81.....	68
24.....	20	53.....	44	82.....	69
25.....	21	54.....	45	83.....	70
26.....	22	55.....	46	84.....	71
27.....	22	56.....	47	85.....	71
28.....	23	57.....	48	86.....	72
29.....	24	58.....	49	87.....	73
30.....	25	59.....	50	88.....	74
31.....	26	60.....	50	89.....	75
32.....	27	61.....	51	90.....	76
33.....	27	62.....	52	91.....	77
34.....	28	63.....	53	92.....	78
35.....	29	64.....	54	94.....	79

INDEX TO PAGES

OF THE

“COLLECTION SCHICK,”

on which may be found the first paragraphs of each page of the English Translation.

—O—

ALL IN VAIN.

<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>
PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.
5.....	5	18.....	16	31.....	27
6.....	5	19.....	16	32.....	28
7.....	6	20.....	17	33.....	28
8.....	7	21.....	18	34.....	29
9.....	8	22.....	19	35.....	30
10.....	9	23.....	21	36.....	31
11.....	10	24.....	21	37.....	31
12.....	11	25.....	21	38.....	32
13.....	12	26.....	22	39.....	33
14.....	12	27.....	23	40.....	34
15.....	13	28.....	25	41.....	35
16.....	14	29.....	25	42.....	36
17.....	15	30.....	26		

—O—

FIRST LOVE.

<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>	<i>English.</i>	<i>German.</i>
PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.	PAGE.
5.....	5	7.....	6	10.....	9
6.....	6	9.....	8		

E. M.

INDEX TO PARTS

OF THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF CHARLES THE FIRST

BY JOHN HAYWARD

ESQ. OF THE BARR

AT LAW

LONDON

Printed by J. Sturges, at the

Printers Office, in Pall Mall

1704

Price 1s.

Half bound in Paper

1s. 6d.

Half bound in Leather

2s.

Bound in Leather

3s.

Bound in Red Leather

4s.

Bound in Black Leather

5s.

PRICE 25 CENTS PER NUMBER; \$4.00 PER YEAR.

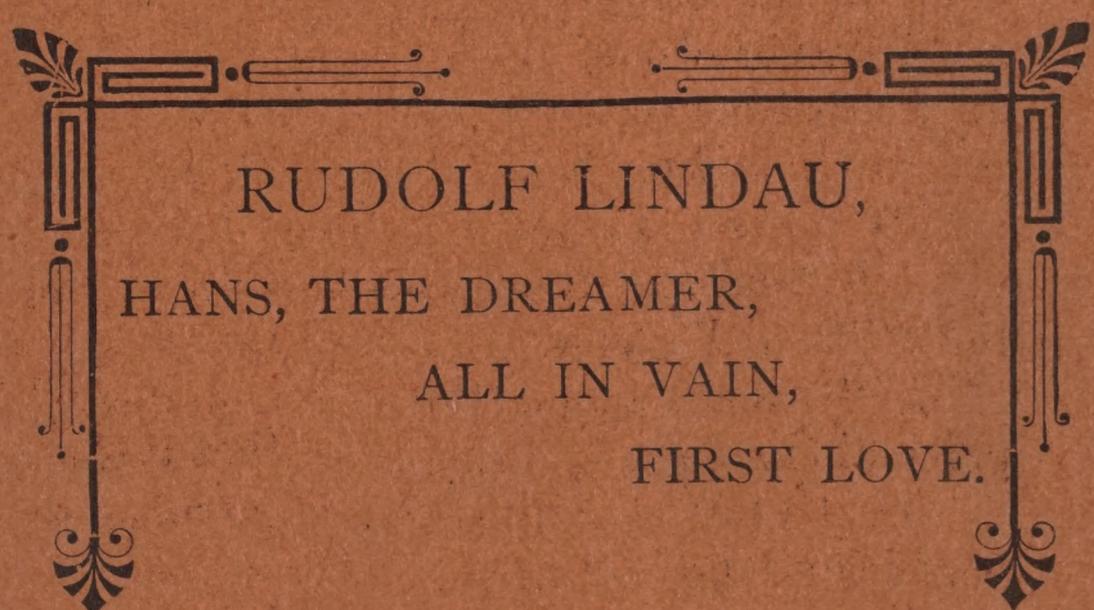


THE OVERLAND LIBRARY.

NOVELS, SKETCHES AND
HUMOROUS STORIES,

BY THE BEST MODERN AUTHORS.

No. 1.



RUDOLF LINDAU,
HANS, THE DREAMER,
ALL IN VAIN,
FIRST LOVE.



A NUMBER ISSUED EVERY THREE WEEKS.

THE OVERLAND LIBRARY.

NOVELS, SKETCHES AND HUMOROUS WRITINGS,

BY

THE BEST MODERN AUTHORS.

Price 25 Cents per Number; \$4.00 per Year.

Issued in Numbers, one appearing every Three Weeks.

—Three Numbers constitute a Volume.—

An elegant Linen Binding Cover can be had for 20 cents additional.

— Price of Bound Volume 85 Cents. —

—O—

PROSPECTUS.

That "Life is short" is an expression characteristic of this country. To the many who, absorbed in a busy life, find but little leisure—to those, therefore, to whom "Life is short"—this Library is especially dedicated. Short stories, and sketches, humorous and otherwise, each of which will serve to occupy a leisure hour or to round out a short afternoon, have been made the chief feature in this undertaking.

In selecting the writings, I have not been guided so much by the author's reputation, as by a careful and personal examination of the stories. I have endeavored to make a distinction between the expression of real feeling and mere invention, and to choose that which seemed to me characteristic in itself and characteristic of the author's peculiar individuality. While this series thus appeals more especially to the cultivated reader, yet I hope that it will win and retain a circle of friends among the great number who enjoy and appreciate clearness and simplicity in sentiment and language.

In the following lines the contents of the first four numbers are briefly indicated:

NO. I. STORIES AND NOVELS BY RUDOLF LINDAU.

HANS, THE DREAMER.—A short novel which recalls Bret Harte's

[Continued on 3d page of Cover.]

best work. The scene is laid first in Paris, and afterwards in a California mining camp, and one of the characters especially—George Warden—is delineated in a way as characteristic of mining life and customs as it is interesting and amusing in its individual features. Love, with and minus philosophy, is the leading theme—the hero, Thomas Midford, being a philosopher, and the heroine, Edith Comyn, a Paris belle. From every point of view this novel is a gem, one of the best for reading out loud to be found in any language.

ALL IN VAIN.—A story of rare simplicity and earnestness, related in a corresponding style.

FIRST LOVE.—A dainty, fanciful little story told to a circle of friends gathered around an open fire in a Paris salon. No one can read it without re-reading it with pleasure.

NO. 2. STORIES AND NOVELS BY FANNY LEWALD.

THE ARISTOCRATIC WORLD.—A story of the Russian Court. The life of a Russian Countess in aristocratic society—her noble character and tragic fate—form the subject of this affecting narrative, in which the celebrated authoress displays her keenly realistic descriptive talent in a remarkable degree. The original German (No. 2 of the "Collection Schick") is considered a very fine specimen of pure, unadorned and fluent German.

THE MAID OF OYAS.—A sketch of nature and life at Dunkirk, a French watering place.

NO. 3. STORIES AND HUMOROUS SKETCHES BY ERNST ECKSTEIN AND ADOLF WILBRANDT.

ECKSTEIN, THE VISIT TO THE LOCK-UP; THE BOARDING-SCHOOL GIRLS.—Two of the best humorous sketches of this popular author.

WILBRANDT, THE PILOT CAPTAIN.—One of the best prose-writings of this celebrated dramatist.

NO. 4. SELECTED STORIES BY PAUL HEYSE.

L'ARRABIATA.—One of the most beautiful of Heyse's short stories.

BEPPPO, THE STARGAZER.—A Venetian story of a melancholy husband and a merry wife, which terminates happily.

MARIA FRANCISCA.—The love of an Italian rope-walker for a German artist. Genuine piety, superstition and deep womanly feeling, closely interwoven and delineated in these pages with rare fidelity of detail, make this story one of the most charming of those fascinating studies of character in which Heyse has rarely been equalled.

The spirit of Italian life and the perfection of diction characteristic of the author are common to all three of these stories.

In connection with the

OVERLAND LIBRARY

the originals of all the stories are published simultaneously in German, the series being called the

“COLLECTION SCHICK,”

each number in the Library corresponding to the same number in the “Collection” of which it is a translation, made with great care in good English, the style of the original being followed as closely as possible.

I am confident that corresponding numbers of the Library and Collection used together or alternately, will be found of the greatest assistance to

THOSE STUDYING GERMAN OR ENGLISH.

This way of acquiring a language is acknowledged by all to be a most valuable aid in instruction; it is certainly more interesting to translate ideas than long lists of dry words which form the main contents of the usual grammar.

As every one likes to see a result from his efforts, the student is anxious to test his proficiency in the language he is acquiring, and I have learned from an experience of many years in the book trade that it is a difficult matter for the American studying German to find anything suitable and interesting for a beginner to read. The “Collection Schick” and “Overland Library” are intended to supply this demand, so that Americans studying the German language or Germans studying English, can have at their disposal a series of bright, entertaining, witty and humorous stories of the highest literary merit, selected with great care and accompanied by translations which serve as dictionary and teacher combined.

The “Overland Library” and its German companion the “Collection Schick” therefore appeal to both the American and German public from whom the publisher begs a cordial support in his undertaking.

L. SCHICK.

CHICAGO, April, 1885.

709







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021896020

